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MRS. NAT COLLINS,

THE CATTLE QUEEN

OF MONTANA.

A STORY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE DURING A RESIDENCE
OF FORTY YEARS IN THE FAR WEST.

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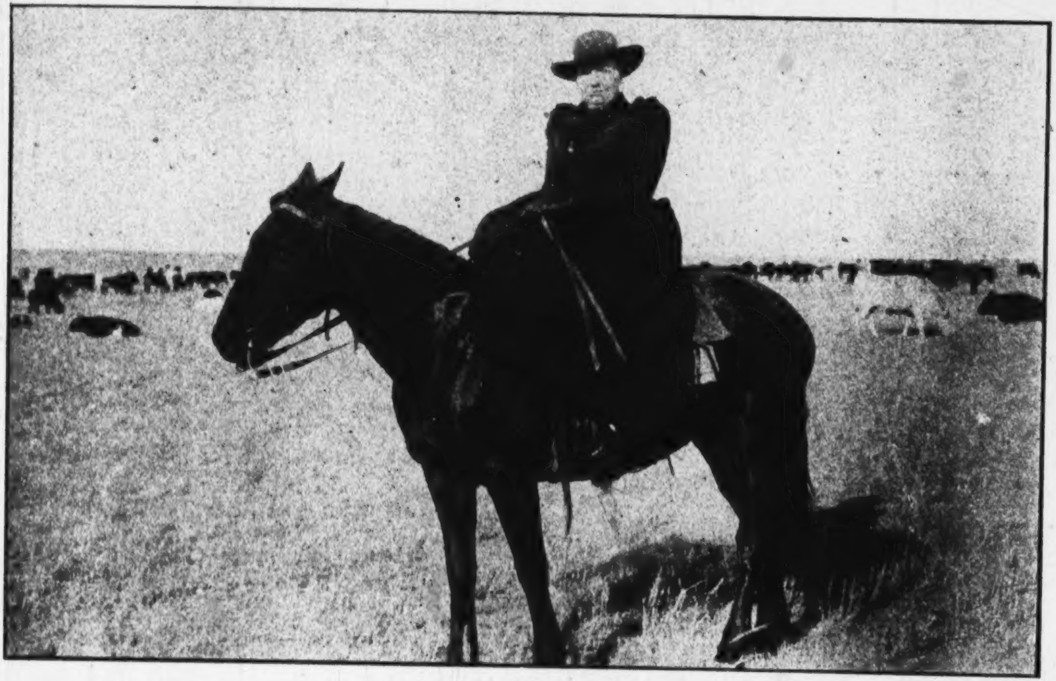

The "Cattle Queen" on a Tour of Inspection.

THE

CATTLE QUEEN

OF MONTANA.

A STORY OF THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF MRS. NAT. COLLINS,
FAMILIARLY KNOWN TO WESTERN PEOPLE AS "THE CATTLE
QUEEN OF MONTANA" OR "THE COWBOYS' MOTHER,"

IN WHICH IS INCLUDED

NARRATIVES OF THRILLING ADVENTURES, RECITALS OF STIRRING
EVENTS, TALES OF HARDSHIPS AND PRIVATIONS, ANECDOTES
OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE
PLAINS, THE MINES, CATTLE RAISING INDUSTRY AND
OTHER FEATURES OF WESTERN LIFE,

LEARNED DURING

A FORTY YEARS' RESIDENCE IN THE FAR WEST

COMPILED BY

CHARLES WALLACE.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

ST. JAMES, MINN.
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PREFACE.

In presenting this work to the public the author's only claim is based upon the truthfulness of the narrative herein related, and, realizing that the simple, unpretentious language employed will undoubtedly meet with much more favor from the reading than the critic world, it is diffidently submitted.

The sole purpose and aim is to furnish the reader with a truthful tale relative to the noble deeds, kindly acts and womanly works, as well as the hardships, thrilling experiences and discouraging trials of one of the most widely known and dearest loved of western-women, and this having been accomplished, the author rests content.

We hear much now about circumstances making us what we are and destroying our responsibility; but however much the external circumstances in which we are placed, the temptations to which we are exposed, the desires of our own nature, may work upon us, all these influences have a limit, which they do not pass, and that is the limit laid upon them by the freedom of will, which is essential to human nature—to our personality.

Here will be found the passing record of a life where inborn noble instincts have, by the aid of a firm will and unflinching determination, withstood the temptations of rough and degrading surroundings, successfully battled with discouragements and bitter trials, and given to the breast that bore them the courage and power to pass through a half century of life such as but few experience, only to emerge from such temptations and struggles the possessor of the admiration, esteem and love of all by whom she is known. Such as are acquainted with Mrs. Collins will verify the truth of this assertion, and those who will study well this brief sketch of her life, note carefully the noble character portrayed and give heed to the teachings of the spirit of true womanhood which has guided her through the many and trying struggles of her western experience, cannot fail to reap a lasting benefit. Strongly entrenched in the goodness of a mother's teaching, with virtue as a support and truth as the firm rock upon which to stand, this woman has withstood the temptations of the rough and, in her early days, uncivilized, west, and buffeted with the vicissitudes of pioneer life, never faltering, never wavering, and amid all ever mindful of the teachings of a christian mother. Gladstone has said "To be womanly is the greatest charm of woman." Truer words were never spoken, and a more womanly woman never breathed than she of whose experience the world will here read.

To write a full and complete history of such a life would be an endless task. The more important events only must be chosen. This has been the aim of the author in preparing this work, and in order that the narrative may possess as much as possible of originality and interest the words of the person of whose life dealing is had have been employed to as great an extent as possible, and every effort has been put forth to reproduce a true story in every essential particular. All is the product of memory, and at no time is the claim made of historical authority other than in dealing with subjects of personal experience.

With the sincere hope that those who peruse these pages will find that which not only serves to interest but at the same time instruct, the author awaits the verdict of such as honor the work with a reading.

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE START FOR PIKE'S PEAK—ACROSS THE PLAINS—INCIDENTS OF THE JOURNEY—DENVER IN AN EARLY DAY—BUILDING A HOME—OUR "BOARDING HOUSE."

Who is there, when he turns to recall his first and fondest associations—when he throws off, one by one, the layers of earth and stone which have grown and hardened over the records of the past—who, I say, has not been surprised to discover how fresh and unimpaired those buried treasures rise again upon his heart? They have been laid up in the store-house of time—they have not perished; their very concealment has preserved them; we remove the lava, and the world of a gone day is before us. Thus it is as I now draw upon my memory for the record of the past two score years—for my narrative shall date from my tenth year—and the past comes to my mind with a clearness most surprising. Clear, distinct and prominent stand forth the recollections of my dear christian mother, my childhood days and girlish associates and early surroundings. While I was always in reality the pet of the family—it was a small family, only ten—still circumstances always appeared to arise, with provoking frequency, which directed, or, perhaps more properly speaking, compelled me, to assume the role of "general roustabout." Were it necessary that an errand should be done it seemed so much easier for all members of the family to speak the name of "Libby" than that of any other person. At times I would have considered that I were greatly blessed had I been burdened with some fashionable, French-flavored, Italian-accented name which would have required a half-hour study of the dictionary to furnish a proper pronunciation, but Fate willed that I should be plain Libby Smith, and in consequence I went on gathering chips—and, by the way, if it be true that a chopper's worth is to be judged by the chips he makes, then I can truly say that from the time I was able to walk until the time I reached the age of 15 or 16, I probably carried in my gingham apron the record of more really good men than appears in the whole Congressional Record. My life from infancy has at all times been an active one, both from choice and necessity, and as I now look backward to the past I realize that it would have been impossible for me to be other than a "little busy-body" for God in His goodness endowed me with a nature abounding with activity, energy and ambition, and had I been compelled to lead an indolent, hum-drum life I should have been the most unhappy person on earth. This fact I can now realize more fully than ever before, for I am now not only sunburnt by the glare of life, but weather-beaten by its blasts.

At the age of ten years I left Rockford, Ill., with my parents, for the State of Iowa, which was at that time considered a frontier country. My father chose as a location for his new home a beautiful spot on a running stream, in the neighborhood of what is now Madison. Here he erected a small log cabin, the logs for the same being drawn several miles. While hardships and discomforts here were as much a part of our regular diet as corn-bread and molasses, still I will pass on to the start for the far west, and the journey across the plains to Pike's Peak. This was the first important event in my life's history, and gifted indeed would be the pen that could describe in fitting manner the excitement, expectancy and bounding hopes of our little party as the work of preparation for the trip neared completion and the start was about to be made. With the exception of myself the children were left behind, four of the older ones being married and the others being at school. A yoke of oxen and also a yoke of cows were procured. These were attached to covered wagons loaded with camping utensils, bedding, etc., and on a bright May day we bid adieu to the old home, and, turning our faces toward the far off west, took up our journey for the gold fields of the Pike's Peak country. This was over forty years ago, and yet the incidents of that start are as clear in my memory as though they were the happenings of yesterday. As the morning sun peered forth from his hiding place, bright and beautiful, the teams were brought to place and attached to the heavily loaded wagons. Soon the ponderous wheels moved slowly foward and amid the blessings and fond farewells of friends, who had gathered to wish us God speed, we started on our long journey across the boundless ocean of prairie. What might have been the innermost feelings of the others of the party as we left our old home on that bright May morning, I am, as a matter of course, unable to say, but, even though I was then but a child, as I saw the old log cabin fade from view, and, looking forward across the broad expanse of prairie to the horizon beyond, thought and wondered of the new world to which we were journeying, there came to my heart a feeling of sorrow and even then I knew that the future held in store for us much of hardship and disappointment and many a bitter struggle.

As the day wore on and new scenes arose to occupy our thoughts the spirits of the little party gradually brightened and as we halted in the evening for our first camp all were alive with excitement born of the novelty of the occasion. My mother was always one of the dearest women on earth, but by nature was inclined to nervousness. I won't say she was a scold, but I will say that the most perfect thing in the world is a woman's temper, and that I have seen some tempers much better than others. The long ride, the fatigue and excitement of the day had developed to a marked degree this nervousness and with the halting of the teams that first evening out until all were sound in slumber our camp was a busy place and Little Lib was the "liveliest toad in the puddle." First a fire must be built and Lib of course must gather the fuel. Next in order was the unpacking of the cooking utensils, provisions, etc., and finally after many provoking mishaps the announcement was made that our first supper was ready.

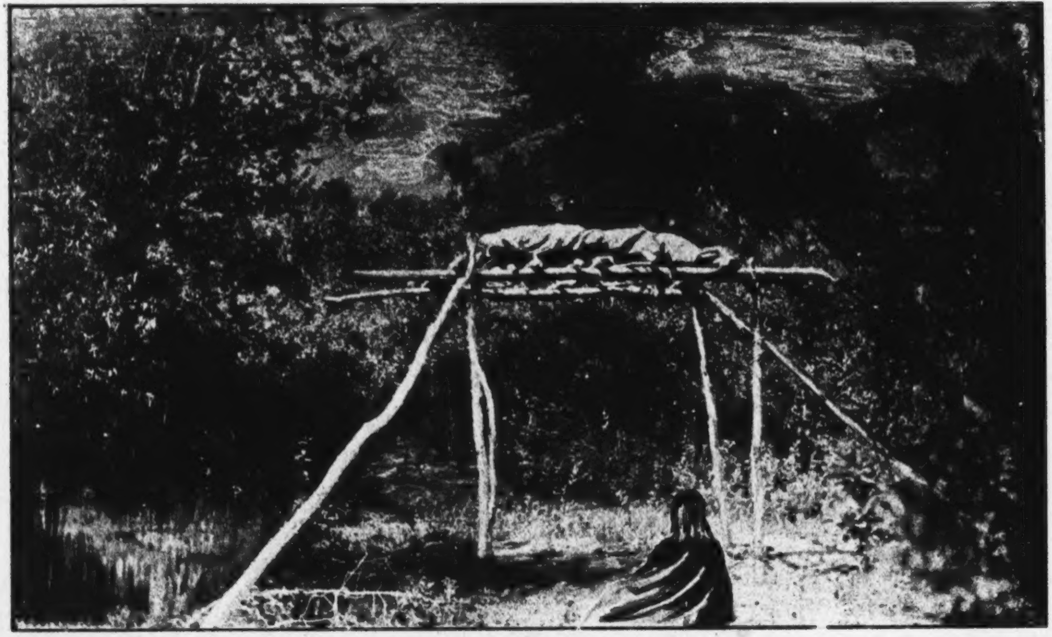
After these many years that picture presents itself to view as plainly and distinctly as the paper before me. Above was the star-lit heavens; from our feet there stretched far away to the north, the south, east and west, a vast velvety carpet of waving grass patterned with innumerable wild flowers, of brilliant hue. As we gathered around the eatables, which were placed upon a cloth spread upon the grass, mother and I seated ourselves upon the spring seat taken from the wagon, while father occupied as comfortable a position as possible upon the wagon tongue, and thus, as we partook of the meal, we talked of the riches we were to gather in the future, the wealth we were to possess and the pleasures we were to enjoy in our new home. Supper being over, we soon sought our resting place and closed our eyes in slumber.

On and on we traveled day after day until the Platte River was reached, at a point near Plattsmouth, Neb., and here we found a party of nearly a hundred wagons about to start for Pike's Peak. This party we joined and in a few days the start across the plains was made. Sunday was always a day of rest from travel. It was also the day selected for washing, churning, etc., and in the afternoon all would gather and listen to the preachings of the chaplain of the party, provided he did not secure a straw early in the day and overload his stomach with "cider vinegar."

As chance would have it I was the only girl—or, young lady as I was called—in the party. Here I met my first young gentleman admirer, but fate, cruel fate, robbed me of him, and the wound—well it hasn't troubled me for some years. Little Johnny, a young gentleman of some 14 or 15 summers, and I suppose a like number of winter, was badly smitten. Go where I would Johnny would follow. One day after a hard day's ride I seated myself by the roadside, near a bed of prickly pears. This is a plant thickly set with needle-like thorns, the wound from which occasions great pain. As I seated myself close beside one of these plants the wind blew my dress slightly over the same, hiding it from view. Soon my little admirer approached, and to make sure that I should not escape him, sat down upon my dress. He was not sociable that evening and soon, very soon was conspicuous by his absence. It is useless for me to say he loved me no longer. Such is friendship.

We found the plains sandy, dry and barren. Wood was very hard to get and many and many a day our cooking was done with dry "buffalo chips." Game, such as antelope, deer and buffalo, was plentiful and easily procured. Of these animals the antelope is probably the most peculiar in habit, as at all times and in all places they will invariably circle in front of their pursuer. Flowers were abundant, but birds and snakes were scarce. Indians were about in large number, but were, during the time of my first trip across the plains, quite friendly and we experienced no trouble whatever on this account.

One Sunday, while resting, a visit was made to a large Indian camp for the purpose of witnessing a burial, and to us this was indeed a novel sight. The body was wrapped



An Indian Brave's Grave.

in skins and robes, and with it was placed the trinkets, pipe, battle ax, spear and other personal property of the deceased, after which it was placed upon a platform made from poles, about ten or twelve feet above the ground, and there left. The Indian dead were invariably buried in this manner, or, in case timber was near, the bodies were placed amid the limbs of a high tree.

Returning from witnessing the burial ceremony, we were accompanied by a large party of the Indians, amongst them being the chief's son. As I was standing near the rear of the wagon, busy in preparing for the evening meal, he stole silently to my side, and, before I was aware of his purpose or intent, quickly clasped me about the waist and planted a rousing kiss upon my cheek, stepped back and smilingly christened me "The White Lilly." I was surprised and startled and as quick as a flash gave him a ringing slap across the face, the force of the blow occasioning a profuse flow of blood from his nose. At once all was excitement about the camp. The boy was angry, and, as a matter of course, had his sympathizers, but the chief happened to be present, and, after hearing of the circumstance, looked upon the same as a joke, and, as an evidence of his admiration of my courage presented me with a handsome pony. From that day forward the name "White Lilly" has clung to me.

Soon after this we reached O'Fallon's Bluff from which place we caught our first glimpse of Pike's Peak, and, although we were still distant nearly 100 miles from our journey's end, still all felt that our weary traveling was nearing a close. At the end of six week's time from the start at the Platte River we reached Denver—or, rather, what is now Denver. At that time the only evidence of settlement was a small log cabin and one or two tents occupied by campers. Our first camping place was at a point midway between the foot-hills and the river, beneath the shade of a large, lone tree, and here it was that father decided to erect his first house. In company with him I left in a few days for the mountains for the first load of house logs. The box was taken from the wagon, the ox team attached, a sack of provisions tied to the axle, and, seated on the "reach" of the wagon, we traveled fifteen miles before coming to a place where suitable timber was to be found. Our first logs were cut from timber on a high ridge, amid the most beautiful surroundings imaginable. The soil was of a redish clay nature, thickly covered with a lovely pine forest, through which little brown squirrels scampered from limb to limb and countless beautiful birds flitted from tree to tree. The odor from the pine, delightful in its intensity, operated upon the weary body and mind almost as an opiate, and, looking about upon the beautiful, vari-colored wild flowers, and surrounded thus on every side by primitive Nature, I felt almost that heaven had been reached and that henceforth all would be sunshine, happiness and repose.

For three days father was occupied in the work of chopping, trimming and loading, our nights being passed during this time in a little hut built of pine boughs. At last we were ready for the start home. Seven large logs comprised the load. All went well for a short distance but, in going down a steep incline, the wagon "reach" broke and the entire load, oxen, father and myself went rolling down the hill. Fortunately no serious damage was done, and, after much sweating, puffing and strong talking on father's part, the work of reloading was accomplished. Again was fate against us, for we had traveled but a mile or so further when the oxen suddenly cramped the wagon and over it went. Again the work of loading had to be done over. This was finally accomplished. About five miles from Denver it was necessary for us to cross the river. In attempting to do this we missed the fording place a short distance and were soon on our way down the stream. I was commanded by father to crawl out upon one of the oxen, and this I did, mounting "old Buck" after a fashion identical with that of a clothes pin on a clothes line. Father swam by the side of one of the oxen, holding onto the animal's tail and we finally reached the opposite shore several rods below the proper fording point, but fortunately at a place where the bank sloped back from the river, and soon had the team and load safe ashore. Thus was the first load of logs secured for our Denver mansion. This trip required eight days, and but seven logs were secured.

The work of hauling logs and building the house was more than father could accomplish alone, and, being without sufficient funds to allow of the hiring of help, the necessity arose of earning money in some way. Finally mother came to the rescue by volunteering to take boarders. Our only table as yet was a large stump and our only cook stove the camp fire, but even though food may not be served upon Damask table linen nor cooked upon a nickel-plated range, still it is a necessity at all times and places, and we soon found plenty who were satisfied to put up with the accommodations offered and pay therefor at the rate of $16 per week for meals alone. In this way funds were raised to pay for help in hauling the logs and building the house. By winter it was habitable.

When finished the house contained two rooms the entire structure being about 18x24 feet in size. Lumber was worth $1.00 per foot, and, owing to this fact, but half of the size of one of the rooms was floored. Two windows, 8x10, costing $1.00 each, furnished light for the interior. Thus did we start in our new home and such was my initial experience in the far west.

CHAPTER II.

A Long, Dreary Winter—Off for the Gold Fields of New Mexico—Incidents of the Journey—The Work of Crossing the Mountains—Our Final Camping Place—Prospecting Begun.

The winter was indeed a long, dreary and discouraging one. During the early winter months mother was stricken with the mountain fever, and in order that she might be made as comfortable as possible, was removed to the cabin of a neighbor who had just completed a more comfortable and better house than father's. This left me at home to do the housework alone, and, as we still retained our boarders, the task was far from being an easy one. Our food was all cooked over a fire place and at times it would seem that my face was fairly blistered from the heat and my eyes blinded by smoke. But to complain was never one of my traits of nature, neither was the expression "give up" ever included in my limited vocabulary, and I struggled on, hoping ever that better times and more comforts would soon fall to my lot. Our old home in the States was seldom heard from. Mail was carried only by horsemen, the postage on a letter being 25 cents, and seldom did we hear from those we had left behind. Our amusements and recreations were only such as we created for ourselves, and it is needless to say life under such circumstances was far from enjoyable. Still all battled manfully against discouragement and with the coming of spring all were ready to take up the battle anew and enter with zest into the struggle for wealth.

In the early spring there came to our house a very sick man who asserted that he was a stranger in a strange land, and entreated that he be allowed to remain in our midst until he was able to travel. Mother had by this time recovered from her sickness, and, prompted by the instincts of a true womanly heart, consented to shelter and care for him. But a few weeks passed ere he had recovered. During the time he had been our guest, he related glowing accounts of rich mines he had discovered in New Mexico, and soon succeeded in spreading throughout the entire camp or settlement a species of "gold fever" of the most approved and irritating character, and by the latter part of April he had formed a company of from 150 to 200, who at once prepared to leave Denver and visit the gold fields of which he told. Shovels, picks, gold pans, provisions, etc., were procured and all made ready for the journey. On one of the last days of April or the first days of May—I do not recollect the exact date—the long wagon train wound slowly away and farewells were said to those remaining on the old camping ground. The first night out from Denver, camp was pitched on Cherry Creek, a stream so called from the fact of its banks being timbered exclusively with cherry trees. From Cherry Creek, southward bound, the caravan slowly passed on across a vast expanse of dry, sandy prairie, no water, no shade being found until the stream known as Fountain Caboyeau was reached. Here good feed and water was encountered, but before reaching this place we were overtaken by one of those much dreaded hot wind storms which at times prevail in that section of country. To describe the suffering which people and stock undergo during one of these dreadful periods is beyond my power. Our hands and faces were burned and blistered, our lips swollen and parched to such an extent as to render eating almost a physical impossibility, and as we neared the banks of the river the stock became unmanageable, and, with their tongues protruding from their mouths, parched and swollen, broke from under control and regardless of wagons or packs plunged headlong through the brush down the bank into the river below. Considerable damage was done to wagons and contents, but three or four days proved sufficient time for repairs and we were soon again under way.

On the evening of our arrival at this point, after camp had been made I proceeded to the river for the purpose of procuring a vessel of water. It was just at dark, and as I passed along a narrow path to the brink of the stream, I was somewhat startled to see just before me the gleaming, glistening eyes of a wild animal. I paused abruptly, and, keeping my eyes steadily fixed upon those of the animal in front, I called for the men at camp, at the same time standing perfectly motionless. Almost as I spoke the animal sprang at me and only by stooping quickly did I escape being caught by its paws. It passed on up the path and the foremost of the party from camp, who had heard my cry and started to my rescue, caught a glimpse of its flaring eyes as it neared him and by a well directed shot killed the beast. It proved to be a mountain lion, and upon measurement was found to be over six feet in length from "tip to tip."

Another incident of our stay at this place worthy of mention was the stampeding of a large number of elk by the hot winds. The animals had been overtaken by one of these storms and, running before its blasts, plunged into a large thicket of cacti upon the banks of the river. As they struggled to free themselves from the torturing situation into which they had blindly rushed the very earth trembled from their bellowing and frantic plunges. The plants at this place grew to a height of probably five or six feet, the main stalk being probably, on an average, some five inches in diameter, and the limbs or branches from 16 to 18 inches in length. The thorns were in the neighborhood of an inch in length, and a wound inflicted by one of these would cause the most intense pain.

After repairs had been made the journey was again resumed, an open prairie country being passed over, until the Arkansas river was reached. Here again we stopped for repairs, and it was here I first saw a Mexican woman. From this point on to the range of mountains which we were obliged to cross in order to reach our destination the country was sandy, rocky and broken. The road was hard to travel and but slow progress was made. Arriving at the mountains, camp was located at the base and preparations made to cross the range. In the way of timber, balsam fiir and pitch pine were abundant, while, in the way of vegetation, luxuriant grasses and numerous varieties of wild flowers covered the ground. The ascent of the mountain was a work of no small magnitude. Several teams were required to pull a single wagon, which, after being hauled to the top of the range would be left and another gone after.

While this work was going on I one day preceeded the wagons and company, some considerable distance, reaching the summit of the mountains in advance of the main company. Well was I repaid for my labors, and, happy indeed would I be could I take you, dear reader, to the spot in person and there point out to you the beauties of animal and vegetable life there witnessed. Upon the towering cliffs sported a herd of mountain sheep, skipping lightly from rock to rock in as confident and fearless a manner as if they were treading upon level ground instead of leaping through space across chasms of unlimited depth. These animals are creamy white, rather larger than ordinary tame sheep, and are provided by nature with enormous horns, gracefully curved in a single turn about the face. These horns develop to an enormous size and at times the animal bearing them is borne down by their weight, and lying down for rest, finds itself unable to arise. About my feet grew beautiful wild flowers, among the pines were to be seen the beautiful white, red-eyed quail which frequent this locality. Here also were flocks of "fool hens", a bird resembling the ordinary prairie chicken, which will sit quietly upon the limb of a tree and allow the hunter to approach and knock them from their perch with a whip or stick. Huckleberries were present in profusion, growing luxuriantly within probably fifty feet of a huge snow bank.

As I turned to retrace my steps to camp, the thought occurred to me that a "mess" of huckleberries would be relished by father and mother and starting through a small grove of timber at my left, in search of a spot where the berries were plentiful, I suddenly came in close proximity to a large black bear. The animal was a curiosity to me, for, being as I was as yet, a "pilgrim" from the States, I was not aware of the nature of the beast. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, to drive the animal from the patch of berries, where it was quietly feeding, I picked a rock from the ground and hurled it. The aim was good and it landed fairly in his ribs. Immediately the bear assumed an upright position and proceeded at a rambling, although swift gait, in my direction. I stood my ground for an instant, but perceiving that he did not hesitate, and being by this time fully convinced that to retreat was now my only chance, I made haste to get from the spot as rapidly as possible. My pursuer still continued the chase and soon the fun was on in earnest. As I ran, my toe caught

Head of Mountain Sheep.

a twig and I fell flat, but it was the work of but an instant to regain my feet and again fly from the animal who was by this time almost upon me. I knew now that my only chance for life was to mount a tree if possible and thus get beyond Bruin's reach, and, acting upon the thought, I directed my course to a small pine and by quick work and strict application to the labor in which I was engaged succeeded in gaining a place of safety upon one of the limbs ere the bear had reached the foot of the tree. The maneuver, I have every reason to believe, was not executed in the most graceful manner imaginable, but haste was the essential feature and as I succeeded in accomplishing the object sought I was well satisfied to think I had escaped my pursuer in any manner. The bear took up a position at the foot of the tree and there for hour after hour he sat, growling and licking his lips, and watching me as I sat on the slender limb just out of the reach of his paws. Several times he attempted to climb the tree, but the trunk of the pine was too small to allow of his succeeding in the attempt and try as he would he could not reach me. The afternoon had passed and the sun had sunk from view ere I heard my mother's voice calling in the distance, I answered, informing her of my situation and in a short time a party came to my rescue and succeeded in killing the animal. By this time half the train had reached the summit of the range, the remaining half still being at the foot of the mountain.

Much difficulty was experienced here in boiling water for cooking purposes, the air being so light that the liquid would evaporate before reaching a sufficiently high temperature to boil. Many of the members of the party were greatly affected by the lightness of the air and many of the horses bled profusely at the nose from the same cause.

The arduous task of reaching the top of the range having been accomplished without serious mishap, preparations were at once made for the descent to the plains of Pueblo. Ropes were brought forth and securely fastened to the rear of the wagon to be let down the grade, and by wrapping the rope about the body of a tree and loosening the same slowly the wagon was allowed to move gradually down the side of the mountain until the end of the rope had been reached, when the wheels would be blocked, the rope wrapped about a tree lower down and the wagon again be allowed to descend. In this way the wagons were one by one taken to the foot of the mountain and finally the work of crossing the range was at an end.

The miner of whom I have spoken as being the organizer of the party and who was looked upon as the leader and guide of the train, now began to manifest signs of uneasiness, and this circumstance soon served to arouse the suspicions of several of the party that matters were not as he had represented them to be. Close watch was kept of his actions and no opportunity was afforded him to escape from the company.

After a rest of three days at the foot of the mountains, during which time search was made for the hidden treasure of which the men were told, it was decided to move on across the plains of Pueblo to the foot of another spur of the range. On the way across these plains Fort Pueblo was passed and a short stop made. Passing on about five miles, the company went into camp again, and prospecting was commenced in earnest.

At the end of a week's time the men were becoming greatly discouraged, and, after a lengthy council the miner who had induced them to undertake the journey was informed that unless he led them to the mines of which he had told within a reasonably short time, his life would pay the penalty of failure. With apparent sincerity he asserted that his inability to find the mines was owing to their having, after first discovery, been covered carefully to remove all possibility of their being found and taken possession of by others. He still expressed belief in his ability to find them provided he was allowed more time for search. His apparent sincerity and truthfulness coupled with the fact that at about this time Kit Carson, the celebrated western scout, visited camp and exhibited numerous nuggets of gold which he had received from the Indians in that vicinity, in a measure again restored confidence and hope in the breasts of the men and with renewed vigor the work of prospecting was again taken up. A few days of prospecting resulted in the finding of several specimens of quite rich quartz and for a time the company were in quite good spirits. But after a time they again became somewhat discouraged and it was decided to divide the camp, one party to remain where they were and the other party to move around the foot of the mountain to the opposite side, in order that more territory might be covered. This move was executed, and for a time I shall now wander from the subject of the mines and speak of sights, scenes and subjects foreign thereto

CHAPTER III.

MEXICAN HOMES—THE FAVORITE FOOD OF THE MEXICANS—A DAY OF ADVENTURES—THE NAVAHOE INDIANS—A VISIT TO THEIR VILLAGE—HOW THEIR HOMES ARE BUILT AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

One of the most interesting topics which occurs to me is that of the appearance of the Mexican homes and their inhabitants. The houses at that time were almost without exception built of sod cut in squares and laid one upon another after the fashion of a brick wall. The interior was about six feet high, and as a rule the houses contained but one room. The floors were made by splitting logs squarely in the center, the flat surface being placed upward. These were called "puncheons." All cooking was done over a fire-place—nearly all the cooking utensils being of stone. A favorite dish with these people I found to be made by boiling corn in lime water until the hull could be easily removed, as is done in preparing hominy. The corn is then dried and pounded between rocks until quite fine. Red peppers are raised in abundance. These are dried and pounded into flour in the same manner as the corn. Mutton is boiled and the broth thickened with the corn and red pepper flours until quite thick, and is eaten by those people with great relish. A fair idea of the amount of red peppers used by the Mexicans may be arrived at by considering the fact that their bodies are so impregnated by the vegetable that after death they dry rather than decay, and a wild animal, which would devour with avidity the body of other than they, will pass them by without molestation.

The Mexican ladies as a rule are very handsome, and dress both neatly and tastily. They are small in stature, with very small hands and feet, brilliant black eyes, heavy hair of midnight darkness, pearly white teeth, and snowy white faces, neck and hands. Their dresses are usually quite short, and of dark-colored goods, with loose waist, tight fitting at the neck, and drawn in at the waist. All wear a sash thrown over one shoulder and thence around the waist, where it is tied with a sailor knot. These sashes are the pride of the Mexican women. They are made from the finest silk, highly colored and decorated at the ends with a fringe nearly if not quite half a yard deep.

Life in camp during the time the male members of the party were busily at work was as a rule very quiet and somewhat monotonous, although, perhaps, no one noticed this state of affairs less than I, owing to the fact that I was always one of the most active in the company. Fate seemed to decree that it should be my lot to be more frequently than others implicated in stirring events. Thus it was in my very childhood and thus it has been to the present day, but the kind hand of God has always appeared to overshadow me and encircle me with a protection through which harm could not penetrate.

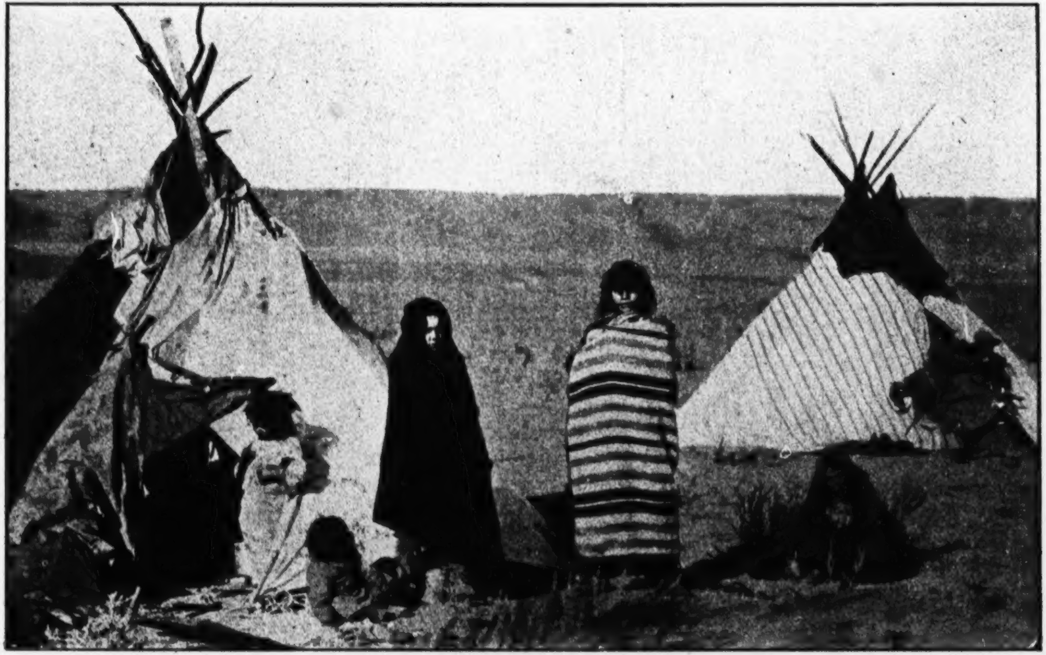
Some little time after the parting of the camps it became necessary for me one morning to visit the opposite camp for the purpose of procuring some medicine for my father who had come to camp from the mountains, where he had been prospecting, quite sick. Happy in the thought that I was to have a short vacation from camp life and enjoy the exhilarating and exciting pleasure of a walk around the mountain, through the forest, and never for a moment thinking of possible dangers which I might encounter on the way, I set forth, with a happy heart, gaily humming a favorite song, and choosing as my pathway a well-beaten game trail which ran around the side of the mighty mound some little way above its base. For some considerable distance I had proceeded on my way, oblivious of all surroundings and totally absorbed by the pleasant sense of freedom from restraint, which at all times I so heartily enjoy, when I was aroused from my meditations by the deep growl of a wild beast. Raising my eyes I found myself standing face to face with a huge mountain lion who was enjoying a morning meal of mountain sheep, as he lay in the game trail scarcely 50 feet distant from me. For an instant I was spellbound and unable to move hand or foot, and then there came to me the thought of my father's suffering and at once I resolved to make my way past this living barrier and never turn back until I had accomplished the mission upon which I had set forth. Had I been engaged in any other errand I should probably have hesitated ere I attempted the daring feat, but the thought of my father's need nerved me on to do that which nothing else on earth could have induced me to do. From my very infancy my father's love had been my most precious possession. For him I would at any time in my life have sacrificed every pleasure, desire, or precious thing, for no child ever could bear for parent more deep, sincere and undying love than did I for my dear old grey-haired father. To him were my troubles always told and my fondest hopes always related and from him was ever received a kind word and loving, tender caress. This, and much of a like nature flashed as swiftly through my mind as the lightning's vivid glare and had I known that to move one step forward would have been to invite instant and terrible death, I truly believe that at that moment I would have considered it a privilege to take that step.

With my eyes steadfastly fixed upon those of the beast who barred my path I slowly, carefully and steadily reached down, untied and removed my shoes from my feet. Never for a moment turning my gaze from the foe in front I made my way carefully to the right and gradually circled about the lion, keeping above the beast and exercising great care in the matter of loosening rocks or dirt which would roll down the incline upon or close to him. Without mishap I gained the trail farther along on my way, and, after having proceeded with haste to a point which I considered a safe distance from my enemy I replaced my shoes upon my feet and hastened on.

For probably half an hour or so I continued on, thinking the while of my adventure, and ere I were hardly aware of the fact I had neared the base of the mountain near the opposite side and was within sight of the smoke from the camp to which I was bound. Below me, some 25 or 30 feet, ran a clear, swift mountain stream, and about me on every hand was the beautiful pine forest, underlaid by a sea of heavy, waving grass and flowers. Unconsciously I paused to drink in the grandeur of the scene, and listlessly sank to rest upon the greensward at my feet. Thus for some moments had I been occupied, when, as I glanced from spot to spot, I was not only surprised but at the same time spellbound with admiration as my sight centered upon a scene a short distance from me. Amid the trees, just below me lay a beautiful animal fondling her two young cubs which playfully bounded about her in their sport. Springing lightly from side to side and then bounding playfully within her reach, she would clasp them in her paws, and, drawing them to her as a fond mother a loved child, she would embrace and caress them tenderly and lovingly. I had no realization of my danger; I was thinking only of the scene before me, and therefore the sharp report of a rifle and the warning cry, "Lib, run; for God's sake run for your life!" came as a thunderbolt from a clear sky and I sprang to my feet with a bound. As I did so, through the trees below the animals I caught the glimpse of a man, and as I paused for the instant my heart ceased its beating, for even as I looked the tiger sprang upon him, alighting fairly upon his shoulders and bore him to the earth.

The struggle was a most terrible one, and drawn on by the cries of the struggling man and the desire to render aid, I ran quickly to the spot. As the tiger had sprung upon him the attacked man was just in the act of shooting, but the force of the blow as the animal struck him had loosened his grasp upon his trusty revolver, and it now lay upon the ground near the struggling pair. His repeated cries for help nerved me on, and, picking up the weapon, and approaching as near as possible, I leveled, aimed and fired, thinking as I did so that were the bullet to miss the animal and find lodging place in the body of the mangled man it would be a circumstance which might be looked upon more as a blessing than as a subject of regret, as he was by this time most terribly wounded and exhausted and were the battle to be continued would soon be at the mercy of the savage beast. My first shot failed of touching the animal and instead ploughed deeply into the fleshy part of the man's thigh. Again I fired, and with the second shot the beast loosened its hold, trembled an instant, and, rolling to one side, stretched full length upon the grass, mortally wounded and dying.

Seeing that nothing more was to be feared from it, I hastened to the stream near by and filled one of my shoes with water, and, returning with all possible haste, bathed the face of the wounded and now unconscious man, and



At Home on the Plains.

tearing strips from my apron and dress bound as best I could the gaping wounds. Leaving him thus I climbed to a large rock upon the side of the mountain and with all my power cried aloud for help, at the same time discharging the revolver in the air. My efforts were productive of quick results, for almost at the first my cries were heard by those in the camp and a party at once hastened to the scene. The wounded man was carried to the camp, his wounds were dressed by the train doctor, and in the course of time he fully recovered, although during the balance of his life his face, head and neck were badly disfigured by ugly scars.

"Say, boys," he would often say, "you can talk about grit and sand, but that air little white-headed, freckled-faced gal has got more sand than all 'o you fellers put together," and I truly believe that to his dying day that man considered me the bravest woman on earth. Well, I believe I am as brave as most women, but still I must admit a little, squeaking, scampering mouse will induce me to seek the highest chair in the room with great haste, and that force of habit leads me to peer under the bed regularly every night upon retiring.

The return to home camp was made in company with a small party who volunteered to escort me safely around the mountain and with pride I delivered the medicine I had been commissioned to procure.

Father soon recovered, his ailment being but a slight one, and soon again camp life became a weary drag to me. Obtaining permission from mother, I one morning started forth upon a fishing excursion up the little creek upon which we were camped. Proceeding some distance up the stream, I soon discovered a desirable location for indulgence in the pleasant pastime and was soon busy at work with hook and line. Trout were plentiful and in the course of an hour or so I had secured a fine string of the speckled beauties. As I was about to abandon the sport and return to camp my ear caught the sound of voices, and as I sat listening they appeared to grow nearer and nearer and soon there appeared in sight a party of Indian children, headed by a young girl of about my own age. At sight of me they paused an instant and then slowly advanced until they had reached my side. With eyes fixed closely upon my face they would walk about me, chattering and jabbering in their native language and after a time they ventured to touch my extended hand. We soon became friends and as soon as I had convinced them of my friendliness they would kiss my hands, fall at my feet upon their knees and in every possible manner endeavor to convince me that I was not only admired but at the same time worshipped by them. For an hour or so we enjoyed each other's company and in parting gathered a pile of rocks to mark the spot where we should meet the following day. I returned home bearing her present, a beautiful collection of rubies, and on the following day returned to the appointed spot. Here I found my little friend awaiting me with flowers and beads and hand in hand we wandered from rock to rock, conversing as best we could in the language of signs. As we were thus engaged we were approached by an Indian Chieftan and I was soon made to understand that the child with whom I was passing the day was the daughter of the chief of the tribe whose village was but a short distance from our camp. He also kissed my hand and reverently laid his hand upon my curls and patted tenderly my cheeks and face. Taking them both by the hand I started in the direction of our camp. At first they hesitated, but soon we started on.

Arriving at camp we found all in an uproar. One of the women, in walking about the place had encountered a tarantula and been bitten by the insect and was reported as being in a dying condition. Leaving his child, as a guarantee of his return, the chief mounted a horse and galloped away. In a short time he returned, bringing with him a package of dried herbs. A portion of these he dampened and bound upon the wound and inside of a day or two the woman had fully recovered. These insects are the most dreaded of all animal kind in that section of country, although almost equally poisonous are the large, black, spider-like insect known as the centipede. A wound from either of these is almost certain to result in death, although as above noted, the Indians are in possession of the knowledge of a native herb, which, if applied in time, will operate as an antidote to the poison of the insect's sting or bite.

At the expiration of a few day's time my newly-found friends, the Indian chief and his daughter, again visited camp, bringing with them several ponies. Their mission was soon made known by signs and motions. Taking me by the hand he would point in the direction of their village and at the same time motion towards his daughter and the ponies. We soon understood that he wished me to pay his home a visit and that as a guarantee of my safe return his daughter and the ponies should be left at our camp. After much entreaty on my part my parents finally consented to the proposed arrangment upon the condition that one of the party of men should accompany me. This the chief deemed satisfactory, and, kissing all good bye, I started forth by the chief's side.

The village was soon reached, and such a village as it was. No system whatever had been employed in the locating of the dwellings, as regards regularity or streets. The houses were all of from three to four stories in height, built exclusively of cut sod, laid up as walls and plastered with a peculiar clay found in that vicinity, which when exposed to the air, assumes a snowy white color and hardens to the stability of rock. None of the houses were provided with windows other than small port holes about the upper part of each story. From the ground to the top of the first story the distance was some seven or eight feet, at which height a jog or pathway was built. Each story was thus set back from and made smaller than the one below it, and the homes all presented the appearance of square boxes piled one upon another—the one at the bottom being the largest, the next a size smaller, and so on to the top.

To enter these habitations it was necessary to mount a ladder to the top of the first story, the ladder was then drawn up from below and so placed that the top of the next story might be reached and thus was the climbing continued until the top of the dwelling was reached. The ladder was then lowered on the inside and the descent from floor to floor made in a like manner. A trap door was provided at the extreme upper point, with a secure fastening on the inside, so that a person once inside, with the door "locked" was secure from all intruders.

Taking me by the hand, and leaving my companion on the ground below, the chief led me, stage by stage, up the outer wall and down the inside to the lower floor. I was the first white person, so I was given to understand, that had ever entered one of these houses or even the village, and was, as a matter of course, much of a curiosity to the people.

I can, in memory, feel my flesh creep and my blood cease coursing through my veins as I entered that wretched hut. Great posts stood about the room—placed there as supports for the floors above—and from these were stretched rude bark and skin hammocks, covered with an abundance of robes and skins of wild animals. The female inhabitants were seated about the room, or more properly speaking hole, busily engaged at various occupations—some preparing wool for weaving, by carding and plucking the same with their fingers; others twisting the prepared wool into yarn, and still others busily at work braiding buckskin strings into whips. These were all seated upon robes and skins upon one side of the room and were dressed after the style of many of the more barbarous tribes of the tropic climes, but a small percentage of them wearing other than the dusky garb of nature. The children were absolutely naked. On the opposite side of the room were to be seen the provisions, piled around and about the rude fireplace where the cooking was done, coarse, uncouth baskets being used to contain the same. By the gloomy light which pervaded the apartment I could discern the nature of these to be dried fish and roots, preserved berries and dried grasshoppers. The entire abode was dark, damp and dismal, and, owing to imperfect ventilation, and the filth and smoke, the air was heavily laden with a sickening odor, which, acting in conjunction with the excitement of the occasion, soon overpowered me and but a few moments after entering the wretched place I became dizzy and sick and fainted.

Upon awakening from unconsciousness my first realization of surroundings was that I was being held in the arms of my companion from the camp, who had remained on the outside upon the ground, where I had been carried by the chief. We hastened back to camp, but for several days I experienced a dizziness and faintness as a result of my visit to that wretched hovel.

How human beings can thus live is beyond explanation. This is "love in a cottage," with intense and prolonged accent upon the word cottage.

The chief and his daughter were invited to remain and partake of our evening meal and accepted the invitation. Upon leaving for their homes that night, they presented me with several tokens of friendship which I have always retained in remembrance of my first visit to a Navahoe village. They were from that time forward during our stay in that vicinity frequent visitors and never failed to bring, as tokens of friendship, rubies, gold nuggets or other valuable articles.

Their chief industry is the weaving of beautiful blankets, tastily colored, and so carefully made as to possess the quality of being used as a receptacle and vessel for carrying water for days at a time without wetting through. They are woven from home-grown wool, colored with dyes made from the roots of trees and herbs gathered by the Indians themselves, and several months of steady work is required in the making of a single blanket. When completed their value ranges from $50 to $100. One of these beautiful works of art was included in the list of presents I received from the chief and his daughter, and is dearly prized as a keepsake, although I am free to admit that its presence recalls other than the most pleasant recollections

CHAPTER IV.

PUNISHMENT OF THE DECEITFUL MINER—RETURN TO DENVER—DEATH OF FATHER THE FOLLOWING SPRING—BROTHER KILLED BY INDIANS—DENVER AT THAT TIME—A NARROW ESCAPE—CARL WOODS, GAMBLER, SHOT.

From the time camp was located and up to the date of the transpiring of these latter events of which I have just written, some little time had elapsed and we will now return to the subject of the old miner and prospector heretofore mentioned. Close watch had been kept of him to prevent his escape from the party; diligently had the men searched for the mines and prospecting had been going on continuously but without satisfactory results. All were now convinced that they had been deceived and misled and amongst them there prevailed a spirit of anger which bid fair to result disastrously to the man who had led them on this long, fruitless search. This feeling of anger and desire for vengeance finally resulted in the calling of a council of the party at which it was decided to hang the miner.

The two camps had been called together, and the most intense excitement prevailed. I shall never be able to blot from my memory the sight of that miserable wretch as he cried and prayed for mercy. On bended knee, with hands uplifted and eyes turned to look up into those of the desperate men about him, he begged, pleaded and prayed for life. But from their lips would come curses in return; from their eyes flashed gleams of anger; and their only reply would be, "Pray, damn you, pray, you old hypocrite for you will never pray again. You shall never live to deceive another party."

At last the word was given to move forward to a deep gulch some half mile from camp, where the "bee" as the men termed it was to take place. The miner was commanded to arise and walk. He arose to his feet, reeled an instant and with a cry of anguish fell fainting to the ground, completely overcome by fright and fear of death. Stepping up to him one of the party gave him a brutal kick in the side.

Springing from the group of crying women and children which stood about, I myself knelt by the side of the prostrate man and with tears streaming down my cheeks I asked that his life might be spared. Earnestly and with sincerity and all the power of my aching heart I pleaded with those angered men that human life be not taken, and as I knelt there thus begging for the life of that miserable man there appeared to come to my aid an inspiration from the throne of God; my lips were moved to utter words savored with the intensity of human kindness, and as I spoke to them of the terrible act they were about to do, the awful crime they were about to commit, their angry eyes flashed less brilliantly, their clenched hands unconsciously relaxed and fell to their side, shame spread its mantle over their flushed faces and they stood with bowed heads and gave heed to my entreaties.

Taking me gently by the hand they led me away, promising the while that the life of the man for whom I had pleaded should be spared. Up the gulch they half carried, half dragged the frightened man, stopping beneath a huge pine. Here they bound him securely and upon his bared back showered blow after blow with switches.

But the punishment although severe was administered more in the spirit of that of a fond parent in chastising a refractory child, than in the spirit of anger and brutality. Cutting the thongs which bound him they returned to camp, and, after a brief consultation decided to abandon the search for the mines and return to Denver.

That evening, as darkness spread her mantle over and about us I stole silently from the camp, to the side of the unfortunate man, and as I neared the tree, far up the deep, dark gulch, he raised upon his elbow and called my name. I had come provided with a small amount of provisions and a canteen of water and this I gave him, bathing the wounds upon his back and placing within his reach—for he was so weakened as to be unable to scarcely move—the clothing of which he had been divested by the men. Thus I left him, and as I moved away in the darkness there fol-

"Lover's Retreat."

lowed me from that lonely tree a "God bless you child," which in tone and expression was as the fond, loving farewell of the parent who feels life fading slowly away and sees the orphan child left to battle the world alone.

The preparatory work for the return to Denver was at once put in motion and ere a week had passed the train was ready to move upon the return journey. All were anxious to reach the old camping ground or settlement, and, urged on by this desire, more than ordinary haste was made. Re-crossing the range at the point at which we first crossed, at the very summit, lying by the side of the trail or road was the body of a murdered Mexican. A halt was made, the body given decent burial, and again we proceeded onward.

While the southward trip had been far from a pleasant one, still the return was far more disagreeable, as it was new getting very late in the fall, the entire summer having been passed in the search for the mines, and the chilling winds, blasting frosts and dismal rains of the early winter season were in prevalence. It is needless, therefore to assert that it was with a feeling of rejoicing and thankfulness that we found ourselves drawing close to our journey's end and finally, upon reaching the crest of a foothill, caught sight of the little city of Denver. To this pleasure was added the greater one to our immediate family of meeting, as we halted at the door of our little log cabin from which we had been absent so long, two additional members of our family—my brothers—who had, during our absence arrived from the States in company with a party of our former neighbors in Iowa. Happy indeed was that home-coming.

That dear old cabin, so humble and unpretentious, so rude and uncouth, still remains to me the dearest spot on earth, and for those dear friend of those trying days I shall always bear the most sincere and lasting love. There are recollections as pleasant as they are sacred and eternal. There are words and faces and places that never lose their hold upon the heart. They may be words that we seldom hear amid the whirl and competition of life, faces that we may never see on earth again, places that we are seldom permitted to revisit; but they were once the scenes, the associates, the joy of our life; they had a controlling influence in training our aspirations and in shaping our destinies, and they can never be wholly forgotten. The flight of years cannot sully their innocence nor diminish their interest, and eternity will preserve them among the dearest reminiscences of earth. We may meet and love other faces, we may treasure other words, we may have other joys, we may mingle in other scenes and form other associations, but these old familiar faces and these dear old familiar scenes remain invested with a fadeless beauty, sacred in their exemption from oblivion and decay.

My brothers, who had arrived during our absence in Mexico, had, at once upon their arrival, set to work in finishing our log house. Lumber had been procured and the entire ground space was now covered with a good, substantial floor. The windows had been enlarged, the cracks well "chinked," and, taken all in all, the house was now so fitted up as to render it light, warm and comfortable.

The little town had grown to quite respectable proportions, being by this time a place of probably fifty or sixty cabins, and as lively a town for its size as ever stood upon the sod of Mother Earth, but still at that time opportunity for the making of money was lacking during the winter months, and by virtue of this fact, father and my brothers, soon after our return, decided to visit the mountains on a hunting expedition, hoping thereby to procure a sufficient amount of game to furnish us with meat during the winter.

When they returned, in the course of two or three weeks, they did so with father lying sick in the vehicle, suffering with a severe attack of lung fever. The disease soon resolved itself into quick consumption, and early the following spring he passed away. Then it was that I felt that all the world held near and dear to me had been taken away, but I had no time for nursing my grief, as every moment of the day now brought a duty to perform.

A few weeks after my father's death, my brothers left for the mountains on a prospecting tour, leaving mother and I at home alone, and the task of earning a sufficient amount to provide necessaries of life was indeed an arduous one. We still had a cow and our little home and by working almost day and night, sewing, mending, etc., we managed to struggle along: My brothers were unsuccessful in their search for gold and in order that they might be able to continue their work, every cent which we could accumulate, over and above enough to buy us flour, was given them.

During the early summer the younger of these two brothers, while on a prospecting tour in the heart of the mountains, was overtaken by a band of hostile Indians and foully murdered. His body was brought to the door mangled and mutilated and as I stood there and gazed upon that dear face my cup of bitterness seemed full to overflowing, and Death would have been a welcome visitor. But it is not easy to die at will, and not until the appointed time does the Master call. We all have our destinies to work out and our allotted life to live, and coward indeed is he who seeks to die for want of courage to battle with life. Many years of work and hardship, many a discouraging event and many a trial and trouble were yet to fall to my lot, and as if the presentment of such were within my heart, I resolved to close my lips to complaining and strive to do well the work outlined by God for me to accomplish.

Denver was at this time, as I have already stated, a fair-sized, bustling, wide-awake western town, and were the truth told had the reputation—and well did it deserve the same—of being what in western parlance is termed "tough." Gambling and gaming, and the quarrels and fights always incident thereto provided constant excitement and "life." Desperate, lawless men thronged the street and scarcely a day passed but that the news would be whispered about from place to place that there was "another man for breakfast" which expression rightfully interpreted conveyed the intelligence that another human being had been shot down or knifed while in the midst of a quarrel over cards at the gaming table. Nor was the peaceably inclined person exempt from danger of being wounded by flying bullets from the gamblers' weapons.

I remember distinctly an incident which will serve to illustrate the prevailing state of affairs at this time. Walking along the main street of the town, I was about to pass one of the large tents in which gambling was being carried on when suddenly a quarrel arose within. In far less time than I employ in writing this brief sketch of the event, the sharp reports of the revolvers of the gamblers were ringing through the street in rapid succession. The fight was at its height in almost an instant, and, greatly startled, I turned to retrace my steps. As I did so a stray bullet pierced my dress and clothing and striking my right limb just above the knee, plowed a neat little furrow through the flesh at a depth of probably about an eighth of an inch below the surface, passing on through my clothing on the opposite side. The wound, as a matter of course, was but a slight one, and soon healed, but the sensation as I felt the leaden missle burn its way through my flesh was not of a very pleasant nature. Had I been six inches farther ahead I would have been badly wounded.

Murderers, desperadoes and gamblers were almost daily being shot down. Carl Woods, a gambler and murderer, was pursued, overtaken and shot down almost at my very feet as I was one day in the act of crossing the Ferry street bridge. Among the poorer class great suffering existed and while women and children were almost starving for want of bread their husbands and fathers would be seated at the gaming table squandering their fortunes, all oblivious of their needs. Gold dust alone was the only form of money in use and with wasteful extravagance and apparent utter disregard of its worth would the precious article be lost or won, as the case might be, by the excited players.

Thus were matters progressing in this wild western frontier town, when, as mid-summer approached, there one day arose an event which for a time attracted the attention of all and led their thoughts into another channel.

CHAPTER V.

MUTILATED BODIES BROUGHT TO DENVER—ORGANIZATION OF THE DENVER VOLUNTEERS—CENTRAL CITY—THE METHODS EMPLOYED IN WORKING THE MINES—LEFT ALONE WHILE MOTHER AND BROTHER VISIT THE OLD HOME IN THE STATES—A MURDER.

Reports had been current for some little time that the Indians were becoming hostile and troublesome. It was known that one or two men had been killed in the neighborhood, but the general opinion heretofore had been that possibly their death had been the result of personal quarrels, and but little heed was paid to the circumstance, for it must be remembered that of so frequent occurrence was the shooting of men during these times that the fact as a rule aroused but slight interest or excitement. But conclusive evidence of the hostilities of the red fiends was soon presented.

Early one morning there arrived in Denver a lone horseman as the bearer of the startling intelligence that a family of white settlers had been massacred a few miles from the town at their home on Cherry Creek. At once a posse was formed and started for the scene of the outrage. They soon returned with the mutilated bodies of a man, woman and child, and the sickening sight of those bodies as they lay in the main street of Denver, upon an overturned wagon box, will haunt me to my dying day.

The man had been scalped and his body torn limb from limb, the straggling, bloody shreds of flesh dangling in ghastly fringe about the bones at the point where they had been severed from the body. The ears and nose had been chopped from the head, the tongue torn from its roots and the eyes gouged from their sockets.

The body of the woman was mutilated in an equally devilish manner. The fair hair of the beautiful unfortunate was thickly matted with clotted crimson blood; sharpened sticks had been driven deep into her eyes; every feature was hacked, gashed and mutilated; into her snowy breast the fiends incarnate had plunged their deadly knife, and with the cruelty of minions of hell had torn forth her very heart. Nor did their fiendish nature find satisfaction even after the accomplishment of these brutal deeds, for her body bore further evidence of having been employed to satisfy the brutish, beastly passions of the living devils into whose power she had by fate been placed. The body of the child, a little boy of probably ten or twelve years of age, had been gashed from breast to lower limbs, and the intestines were fully exposed to view.

Here indeed was evidence of a most terrible and bloody crime, and as the gathering throng looked upon the ghastly spectacle there arose in the breasts of those sturdy western pioneers a determination that vengeance should be meted out to the guilty parties, and ere the sun had set there had been organized the first company of Denver Volunteers, with Colonel Shivington, a presiding elder of the Methodist Church, as commander. Among the names of these men who thus organized for the purpose of protecting the homes and lives of the settlers was that of my brother.

During the balance of the summer, fall and early winter several encounters occurred between the Indians and the Volunteers, but the red man was invariably bested and soon hostilities were in a measure suspended.

Late in the summer brother decided to return to his prospecting and the decision was reached that mother and I should take up our abode at Central City, a place about twenty-five miles from Denver, farther up in the mountains, near which place his prospecting operations were being carried on. Here we remained during the fall and winter and until quite late the following spring.

Brother's labors were not crowned with success and the long winter months were dreary and discouraging ones Winter set in very cold and snow fell to an unusual depth. Our provisions finally dwindled to the limited variety of potatoes and hominy, and even the quantity of these became scant. On one of his tours in search of gold brother was overtaken by a blinding snow storm, and when finally brought home by a party who chanced to find him his condition was most critical, his hands, face and feet being badly frozen. About this time mother was rendered unfit for work by a severe attack of erysipelas, and as a consequence the care of the entire home fell upon my shoulders.

With brother and mother both sick, our funds exhausted, our stock of provisions fast disappearing and no visible means of future support at hand, it was with a feeling that fortune had indeed smiled upon us that I received and accepted the offer of assuming the care of two motherless children whose father agreed to pay for their keeping at the rate of $40 per month. This furnished us with funds with which to purchase food and clothing and in this way we managed to struggle through the winter.

With the coming of spring my brother was stricken with a severe attack of "calico fever"—he had left a pretty sweetheart in the state of Iowa—and soon preparations were being made for a trip to the old home in the States. A consultation of the members of the family resulted in the verdict that brother and mother should return to Iowa, he to see his sweetheart and make her his bride and mother to sell the old farm and pass a few weeks with old friends and acquaintances. Funds would not permit of my going also, and so I was obliged to content myself with remaining at home and caring for the little charges I had taken.

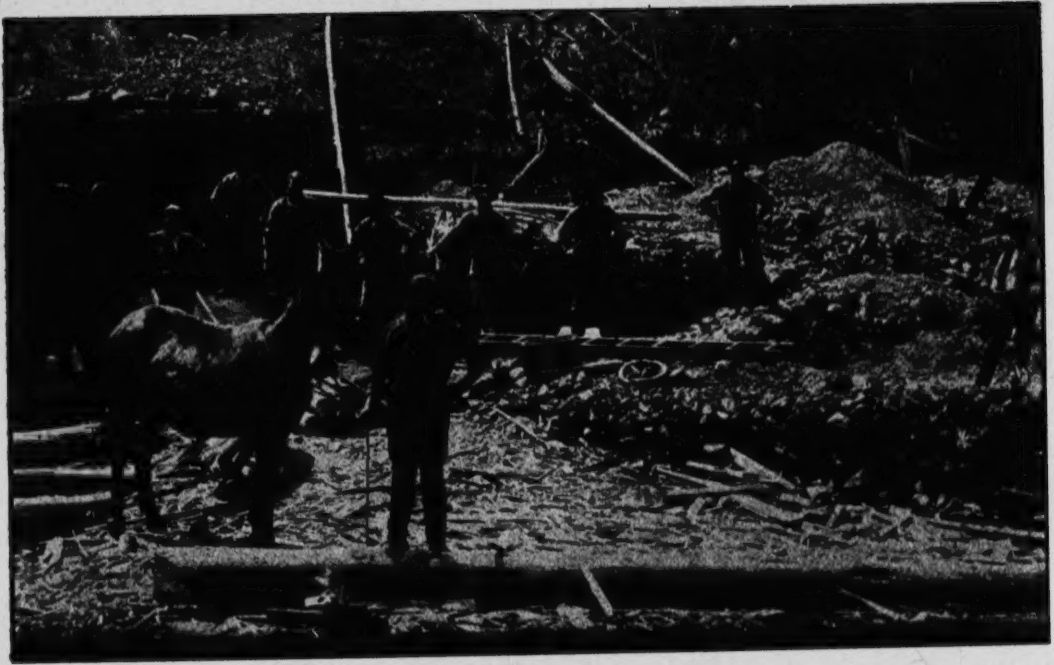
This I did and in addition to my daily cares about the house found time to learn the trade of glove making by the practice of which I earned a considerable amount, receiving $10 per pair for embroidered buckskin gloves, and receiving orders for as many of the same as I could find time to make. Thus did I employ my time until their return, awaiting which event, kind reader, let us look about us at the surroundings of my cabin home and the town of Central City.

The approach to the city is made through a deep gulch or canyon, hemmed in on either side by towering mountains. The roadway is as a winding stairway, circling the mountains at a gradual incline until the city is reached. The mountains are well timbered with pine, with the exception of spots where huge walls of granite rock rise majestic and towering for hundreds of feet, but to endeavor to paint a pen picture of the grandeur and sublimity of these mountain scenes would be to undertake a hopeless task.

The mines here at that time were but just being opened up and their working was after the primitive style. Shafts were sunken in the side of the mountain until "pay rock," or, more plainly speaking, mineral-bearing ore, was found. These shafts, or dry wells, were curbed with poles as they were being dug, to prevent the sides from caving, and were usually about five feet in diameter. The shaft having been finished to a sufficient depth, a windlass was provided at the top or entrance, and the ore as it was loosened by the miners at the bottom of the shaft was loaded into buckets, and raised to the top of the ground, the power used being oxen attached to a large capstan, or in miners' parlance, a "whim."

From the mouth of the mine the dirt and rock was taken to the "arastra." This machine was built as follows: Round about an upright post which was so arranged as to permit of its revolving, was laid a flooring of rocks to a distance of several feet, the outer edge of the pile being in the form of a circle which was bounded by heavy planks arranged in the form of a large tub. Across the top of the post were fastened two heavy beams, the ends of the same being equi-distant from the center of the post, thus forming four arms or "sweeps." From the end of each "sweep" was suspended, by rawhide thongs, large granite boulders, the lower surface of which would but just touch the upper surface of the rock floor, and thus as the post was revolved the heavy rocks would describe a circle in their course, crushing and grinding all rocks, and ore in the "arastra" to a fine sand or flour.

At the time the ore was placed in the "arastra" to be crushed a quantity of quicksilver would be scattered throughout the mass and at the same time a small stream of water would be turned on. As the process of grinding continued the gold would separate from the ore in small particles, and, being attracted by the quicksilver would form into chunks or balls varying in size from that of a hickory nut to that of a goose egg or larger. The ore and quartz having been ground to sufficient fineness the powdered product would be transferred to gold pans—small sheet-iron, flat-bottomed vessels resembling much the ordinary milk pan, with the exception of being larger—and with the aid of water the powdered rock and what little



At the Mouth of a Mine.

earth there might chance to be mixed therewith, would be carefully washed and separated from the gold by hand.

The gold and quicksilver was then enclosed in a small buckskin bag and subjected to a steady but heavy pressure which had the effect of forcing the greater part of the quicksilver through the buckskin, leaving the gold within. The contents of the bag would then be placed in an open pan and be subjected to an intense heat, the effects of which process would be to evaporate the quicksilver, leaving the pure gold dust intact. Thus did these hard-working miners secure their treasure.

The quartz at this place was of the white crystal variety and was considered quite rich and productive, although, as a rule, white quartz is not good paying ore.

This town, like Denver, was a lively one, and as was the case in all frontier towns at that time, was inhabited with many rough characters. Were it known that a person had money in any considerable quantity there would always be found those willing to resort to almost any means to obtain the same. Nor were the men alone always the only ones implicated in these robberies and murders.

As handsome a woman as I ever knew was one of the principals in a murder and robbery while I was a resident of this place, and while I was not an actual eye witness to the crime, still I was at the time within but short distance of the spot where it was committed. It happened one evening as I was upon the mountain side in company with the little children over whom I had assumed the position of foster-mother.

Passing along the roadway which ran along and around the side of the mountain we met a man and woman who appeared to be in earnest conversation. Their actions and appearance led me to the opinion that they were sweethearts who had but just met after a long separation, and particularly loving and kind appeared the gentler of the pair. They passed on up the mountain and I and my little charges continued on our way. A short distance farther on we met a man making his way rapidly along in the direction of the pair we had just passed. But a brief period elapsed ere the sharp, ringing report of a discharged firearm rang through the air, and instinctively realizing that a tragedy had been enacted, I turned and hastily retraced my steps. Rounding a point of rock but a few hundred feet from where I stood at the time I heard the shot, I came upon the bleeding body of the man who had but a short time previous passed me in company with the woman. The others had disappeared. I lifted his head in my arms, but the first glance at his ghastly face told me that his spirit had taken flight to the distant, far away shore, and that life was extinct.

I returned to the little city with all possible haste and made known the particulars of the terrible event, and in a short time men were in search of the guilty pair. They were soon captured, and upon being brought to town confessed their crime and revealed the motive of the same as well as the manner in which they had hoped to accomplish their purpose.

As the man was known to have a considerable amount of money about his person, the beautiful woman had with fond words and tender caresses enticed him to the lonely mountain road, and there, while all unmindful of his danger, the companion of her guilt had with brutal hand and fiendish heart, under the cover of the pretended right of an outraged husband to summarily deal out punishment to the seducer of his wife, foully murdered him. The next day witnessed the execution of the guilty pair, both being given a trial, pronounced guilty and hung by the neck until they were dead. Such was life in Central City, Col., at that time.

CHAPTER VI.

A TRIP TO PIKE'S PEAK—THE "GARDEN OF THE GODS"—ATTACKED BY INDIANS—WOUNDED—REFUGE IN A CAVE—AN INDIAN SCARE IN DENVER—START FOR THE STATES.

As spring lengthened into summer, a desire to return to the old home at Denver grew upon me, and finally making arrangements for the care of the little motherless children at the home of a good, kind family, I bade adieu to Central City and returned to the little cabin beneath the lone tree, there to await the return of my mother and brother.

But a few weeks passed from the time I arrived at Denver, ere they returned accompanied by my brother's wife, whom he had married during his absence, and one of my brothers who had been left at school at the time of our departure from Iowa.

A new life now opened for me. Reared amidst the environments of a city, possessed of a classical education and brightly enameled with the polish of eastern society as she was, my brother's chosen companion was to me more a person of whom I stood in awe than one with whom I could associate. From her dizzy height of refinement and culture she looked down upon me almost as would the towering, picturesque mountain with stately forests, noble piles of granite and beautiful, snow-tipped crest, gaze upon the barren plain of desert land at its feet, and under the chilling influence of her haughty words and acts I soon became not only very discouraged, but at the same time discontented.

I never liked these cold, precise, perfect people, who in order not to speak wrong never speak at all, and in order not to do wrong never do anything, and from that date up to the present time I cannot say that I have ever had any particular fancy for that species of the human race known as sisters-in-law. There may be some who are loveable and desirable possessions, but my experience has been that the sections of the country where I have made my home furnish at best but poor food for them and they do not appear to thrive well. I am free to admit that I may harbor a fancy upon this subject which renders me unfit to pose as authority, but as my motto has alway been to "tell the truth, even though the heavens fall," I speak thus plainly, and even as I do so seek the shelter of courage of conviction and await the downpour of wrath which is sure to follow.

As I have just said, I was becoming discouraged and discontented, and therefore the proposition of my brother, who had just come from the States, that a pleasure and sight-seeing trip to Pike's Peak be taken, met with great favor on my part, and mother's consent having been obtained, we set forth to the mighty mound, well provided with provisions, camping utensils, etc.

This noted mountain is distant from Denver in the neighborhood of one hundred miles. Our journey to the mountain was marked by no particular mishaps, and upon arriving at the foot of the same we found a small pleasure party there camped, preparing for the ascent.

Starting early in the morning and leaving our teams at the foot, we toiled onward and upward through the forest, past the yawning chasms, over the bowlders, cliffs and rocks, and finally at nightfall had reached the summit. Here we camped for the night, amid the clouds. Far, far below us floated the fleecy, flaky wanderers, and ere the descent was entered upon the following morning a thunder storm had gathered and burst below us, and as we gazed far down the incline to the canyons below, the lightning's vivid flash was seen as the rebounding echoes of the mighty thunder rolled upward along the slope to our ears.

Leaving the summit we with difficulty descended the slope. I say with difficulty, not as a figure of speech, but as the assertion of a fact. Far more difficult is the descent of a steep incline than the ascent. The limbs of the pedestrian tire much more quickly, and extreme caution must be exercised or a fall is sure to follow.

Varying from our former course we passed partially around the mountain and entered a basin-like opening known as the "Garden of the Gods." Here were we met by a scene which surpasses all description.

Central in this natural park, towered upward to a height of several hundred feet, three mighty pyramidal cliffs, resembling in outline and general features the ruins of some ancient temple, each distinct in color from that of its neighbor—one being of a beautiful mottled granite, another of snowy white flint, and the third of a handsome red stone similar in character. Upon their face or surface, as a result of the action of the winds, they bore figures almost lifelike in their resemblance of human beings, and far up their sides various figures, windows and spires, as perfect in their outlines as they would have been had they been fashioned by the chisel of some noted sculptor, were discernable.

Scattered here and there about the base of this mighty temple were smaller rocks in representation of a throng of worshipers, and he who would pause to ponder would find food for reflection upon the ages gone by and the changes yet to be wrought by Nature's hand.

As one gazed upon those motionless figures, shaped in all their graceful curves and wondrous grandeur, the mighty faces seemed so sad, so earnest, so longing and so patient. They were stone, but yet they seemed almost as living beings. If ever images of stone thought, they were thinking. They were looking toward the verge of the landscape, but looking at nothing—nothing but distance and vacancy. They were looking over and beyond everything of the present, and far into the past. They were thinking of the wars of departed ages—of the empires they had seen created and destroyed—of the nations whose birth they had witnessed, whose progress they had watched, and whose annihilation they had noted—of the joy and sorrow, the life and death, the grandeur and decay of many thousand slow revolving years.

All who know the pathos there is in memories of days that are accomplished and faces that have vanished, will have some appreciation of the pathos that dwelt in those grave eyes that looked so steadfastly back upon the things they knew before History was born—things that were and forms that moved in a vague era and have passed one by one away and left the stony dreamer solitary in the midst of a strange new age.

There was that in the overshadowing majesty of those eternal figures of stone, with their accusing memory of the deeds of all ages, that revealed to one something of what he shall feel when he stands at last in the awful presence of Almighty God.

There were immense rocks—bowlders—so nicely poised on a mere point that a little force would set them in motion while the strength of many hands could not bring them to rest, and here stretched far on either hand this vast Nature, daunting, bewildering and enchanting. Even though in the midst of this enchanting spot antiquity was present in person, still upon the mountain sides which bound this sacred abode of Nature, every wrinkle of inconceivable antiquity was cunningly hidden under roses and violets and luxuriant grasses.

Every inch of the mountains was scarred by unimaginable convulsions, yet all, under the cover of Nature's garb, seemed only as the yielding velvet of the finest texture.

Reluctantly turning from this beautiful spot, quite late in the afternoon we started on for the point where our teams and wagons had been abandoned the previous morning. As we neared them we could see in the distance, upon the plains, numerous horsemen riding hither and thither and perceived at once that an Indian battle was in progress. With caution we moved on until the teams were reached, and, hastily harnessing the same, attached them to the wagons and retreated to the mountains, camping some distance up the slope in a small natural basin or park and near a small mountain stream.

Great care had been exercised in making this journey, that a route should be traveled which would enable us to keep at all times from the sight of the Indians, and as we rested that night we felt secure and content in the belief that our presence in the neighborhood of our red enemies was unknown to them.

After camping for the night my brother was detailed as a scout to prospect the adjoining vicinity and ascertain if possible whether or not Indians were in our immediate locality and also, by mounting the highest point of land near by, gain knowledge of the movements of the band below. He started forth and shortly after dark returned with the report that as near as he was able to ascertain or judge by the actions of the Indians, all was well and that our movements of the afternoon had been unnoticed.

While on this scouting trip my brother by chance discovered, but a short distance from our camp, the entrance to a subterranean cavern, and fortunate indeed did this discovery prove.

All went well with the little party during the evening and night, with the exception of the necessity of partaking of a cold lunch for our evening meal, as it was not deemed advisable to build a fire for fear it might lead to our presence being discovered by the Indians.

But we were deceived in the belief that we had been unseen, for as morning dawned and almost simultaneous with the appearance of the first faint, grey streaks of light in the eastern sky, there sounded upon every side and went ringing, vibrating and echoing through the mountain canyons and about the towering cliffs the wild, weird and blood-curdling war cry of a mighty host of fiendish Indian warriors.

At the first cry the camp was in an uproar. Snatching up a pair of old overalls, brother handed them to me with the stern command, "Crawl in, and be quick about it, too." Scarcely waiting for me to obey the command—for the feat of stowing away a medium-sized female and several yards of skirts in the interior of a pair of overalls is one which cannot be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye—he firmly grasped my hand and running with all possible speed we sought to escape. But a short distance had been covered ere a stray bullet found lodging place in one of my limbs, striking me fairly upon the knee-cap of my right knee. Our movements were by this time discovered and with the fury of demons a small squad, which separated from the main body of the attacking force, swept down upon us.

As I fell by the shot by which I was wounded, my brother stooped and raised me in his arms and continued the flight, directing his steps toward the mouth or entrance of the cave he had the night before discovered. Even in less time than I have been writing, this spot had been reached and, with an admonition to be brave, he dropped me to the depths below, he himself following, after first pausing an instant on the brink and, turning so as to face his pursuers, wildly waving his arms about his head, pointing his finger to the heavens above and then, leaping high in the air, apparently plunged into the bowels of the earth.

The Indians, without exception, are prone to superstitious beliefs, and our sudden disappearance from the surface of the earth in this, to them, startling manner, led them to believe that we were in collusion with the spirits, and none dare approach the spot where we had so mysteriously disappeared.

The floor of the cave into which we had entered in this abrupt and unceremonious manner was at a depth of about five feet below the surface at the point of our entrance and this distance we both fell, but, although somewhat bruised and jarred by the fall, neither of us were badly injured

My knee was bleeding badly and paining me most terribly. By the uncertain light—as soon as we were satisfied that we were not pursued—brother bound the wound with strips torn from my dress, while the overalls I had so hastily donned were wrapped about his hand and arm which had been badly bruised and lacerated by the fall into the cave.

The reader, unless he chances to be a person familiar with the peculiarities of the savages, has no doubt ere this sought for an explanation of the necessity for my assuming in a measure the garb of a male during this escapade, and to such inquiring minds I will at this time say that it was solely for the purpose of deceiving our pursuers in the matter of my sex and to cover my identity as a female, for an Indian warrior will face any and all dangers, rush blindly and with the most unflinching nerve into the most deadly peril to effect the capture of a white woman, and had they known that the "White Lilly," as I was called, was so nearly within their grasp, nothing would have served to daunt them in their efforts to take me captive.

Throughout the long, weary day we remained hidden in this underground retreat, momentarily expecting an attack and not until night had fallen did brother venture to approach the entrance. He then with extreme caution crept forth and finding all quiet about, gathered pine knots for a fire and light, and with his knife cut a sufficient number of pine boughs to form for me a comfortable bed. Bringing these to the entrance of the cave, a small quantity at a time, he threw them to the floor below, and when a sufficient amount had been obtained, followed himself.

A blazing fire—by the light of which he arranged for me a bed—was soon provided, and as the flames shot up from that little pile of pine knots, there was disclosed to our view as grand and brilliant a sight as ever human eye rested upon. Broadening, widening and stretching far back into the dim distance were walls of glittering, sparkling crystals of fantastic shapes and forms. Hanging from the walls above were thousands upon thousands of irregular and peculiarly shaped prisms, and as the flickering light from the fire played in and about the nooks and niches, the effect was as if the walls and roof had been studded with brilliant diamonds, rubies and sapphires.

For an instant our dangers and painful wounds were forgotten and we gazed with admiration upon the scene about us, but our aching limbs soon brought us to a realization of our situation, and after arranging as best he could for my comfort, my brother crept forth into the darkness to search for help and learn the fate of those from whom we had parted.

Alone in that cave, my feelings may far better be imagined than described. My every move, and even the crackling of the fire, as it devoured the pitchy pine knots, would stir up weird and uncanny echoes which would go hurrying and scurrying from floor to ceiling, from wall to wall, and finally die away in the dark depths of the distance, and my feverish imagination converted the sparkle and glimmer of the crystal prisms into the angry glare of the glistening eyes of a myriad of wild beasts. Not a sound could be heard from the earth above and the very presence of death seemed to pervade the atmosphere.

Tired and suffering, with strained nerves and disconsolate heart I awaited the return of my dear brother, but before the transpiring of that event I had fallen into a troubled sleep from which I was awakened only by the sound of his voice and the touch of his hand upon my feverish face. With him were several miners who kindly volunteered to give me shelter and food at their camp until such time as I should regain sufficient strength to return to my home.

Of the company of which we were members at the time of the attack by the Indians, three men and one woman were killed and scalped and their bodies terribly mutilated.

The Indians were now with alarming frequency committing depredations of more or less seriousness, and all the inhabitants of Denver and vicinity stood in constant fear of the savage fiends. The fact of the killing of the members of our party was of course known by the time I returned home and I was, upon my arrival, visited by countless numbers of friends and acquaintances and plied with questions of every sort relative to the adventure.

The excitement over the occurrence was just at its intensity and the subject was upon the lips of nearly every person in the little town, when one evening, about 10 o'clock, in some manner an alarm was given that the Indians were about to attack the town.

The report was immediately accepted as true and the wildest excitement prevailed. The women and children were hurried to a building centrally located, which was selected as the one offering the best protection from the assaults of the expected foe, the male portion of the inhabitants sought their firearms or some secluded hiding place—about an equal number of each—and for the moment confusion reigned supreme.

I was taken from my sick bed and scantily clothed and covered, carried to the general rendezvous and deposited upon the floor in one corner, amid the throng of crying women and squalling babes. Amid this confusion, and suffering almost unbearable torture from my wounded limb, I was allowed or rather forced to remain until about 3 o'clock the following morning, when it was learned that the alarm was a false one which had been started by some weak-hearted "pilgrim" who chanced to hear an uproar from a party of drunken Mexicans who were camped on the outskirts of the town.

By the time I was returned to my bed at home the strain upon my weakened nerves had proven too great a one to be withstood and I was wildly raving as the result of a severe attack of brain fever.

For weeks and months I lay in this condition battling with death, and my life hanging, as it were, suspended by a mere thread. At last there came a change for the better, and late in the winter I rallied from my sickness and with early spring was sufficiently recovered to be up and around and assume, in a limited measure, my duties about the house.

Then it was that my mother offered the suggestion that I return to the States for a few months of rest and recreation, and a seeming opportunity soon presented itself to carry this suggestion into effect.

The settlement had by this time grown to considerable size and the demand for teams and wagons for freighting purposes was quite large. Brother was offered good wages to engage in the business of freighting merchandise across the plains, and accepted the offer, and with him on his first trip was I to return to my old childhood home.

With a heart beating with joy and happiness and a mind filled with fond expectancy of anticipated pleasures I completed all necessary arrangements and we were ready for the start in good season to join the large company of freighters who started on the long journey early in the spring. Fond, loving farewells were spoken, tender kisses exchanged and, followed by the God speed of family and friends, we set forth upon the journey—a journey which proved pregnant with peril and suffering.

CHAPTER VII.

START FOR THE STATES—CAPTURED BY INDIANS—MY COMPANION PRISONERS—A FRIEND AND A FOE—WHITE CHILD BURIED ALIVE—THE INDIAN VILLAGE—CAPTIVE LIFE BEGINS.

We had traveled eastward several hundred miles across the vast expanse which lay before us and our point of destination, when late one afternoon we separated from the main company, intending to visit the family of a settler who was known to be living on the banks of a small stream which ran a few miles to the right of the trail, after which we expected to again join the train.

For several days past no signs of Indians had been seen and thinking that as none of the savages had been noticed it followed as a matter of course that none were about, the probability of an attack never entered our mind.

Herein were we misled, for experience has taught me that as long as Indians are to be seen about the hills and plains, there exists but little danger, but let them disappear from sight for the period of a day or two or even a week, and it may be taken for granted that an attack is being planned.

Just at dusk we neared the banks of the little stream and, proceeding leisurely along, all unmindful of impending danger, were soon traveling through the thick timber which skirted the stream on either side backward from the water's edge for a distance of perhaps half a mile.

Suddenly, as rise the myriads of grasshoppers from the grass around and about the feet of the galloping steed, there sprang from their hiding places in the brush about us a band of Indian warriors, and ere we could scarcely raise a hand we were fully surrounded and completely within their power.

With a courage born of desperation my brother endeavored to break through the circle of foes by severely lashing the frightened team, but the mules were quickly grabbed by the bridles which they wore and even in less time than is required to relate the incident brother had been overpowered and with a savage blow knocked from his seat in the wagon to the ground beneath, thus leaving me at the mercy of the detestable, ugly and repulsive red men. Dragging me from the wagon, which they quickly ransacked and plundered, they blindfolded my eyes and placed me upon a pony before a warrior, and soon we were on the move, never halting until the morning of the following day, except for a few moments at a time for the purpose of allowing the ponies, which the members of the band rode, to drink from an occasional stream across which our route lay.

At last a halt was called and upon the stop being made the bandage was removed from my eyes, although my hands were left tied, and as I was lifted from the horse my feet were bound in a like manner. How far we had traveled or in what direction I knew not. My first thought was of my brother, but though I scanned closely every face, he was nowhere to be seen, and at once I came to the conclusion that the blow which had knocked him from the wagon had been a fatal one.

Near me, with hands and feet securely bound, lay a white woman and six children, ranging in age from about twelve years downward to a nursing infant— the family of the settler whom we were on our way to visit when captured. An attempt on my part to speak to my companion in misery was checked by my body guard placing his dirty, filthy black hand over my mouth, and at the same time raising his battle-ax threateningly above my head.

Soon we were given water and food and in the course of an hour or so we again proceeded on our journey. As had been the case during the night, I was placed upon a horse before a warrior, but the white woman of whom I have spoken was forced to walk by the side of a pony and carry her babe, while the children were also compelled to walk.

I soon discovered the reason for the favoritism thus shown me, for upon close study of the face of the warrior with whom I was riding I remembered the features as those of the chief who had admired my courage in slapping the face of his son at the time of his visit to our camp on our first trip across the plains several years before. He had recognized me and decided that I should become his possession.

But with this discovery arose a new and greater fear within my heart, for well did I know that should I fall into the hands of the son, hopeless indeed would be my condidion. Even as these thoughts were passing through my mind the person of whom I was in such dread rode to the side of the pony upon which we were riding and engaged in conversation with his parent, and well did my heart tell me of what they were talking, and fully did I realize the intent and purpose of that red brute as he turned toward me with eyes flashing with hatred and a devilish smile upon his ugly face, and I knew that were I to be surrendered to his power I should suffer a fate worse than death and that while life remained in my body I should undergo the tortures of a living hell. But the chief seemed determined retain me and I still kept my seat with him.

On across the hot, dry, sandy plains we traveled and by night the woman and children who had been forced to walk, without rest the entire day were footsore, faint and weary almost unto death. Our camp for the night was near a small stream where we found a camp of women and children awaiting us, and hardly had we halted ere the matter of the possession of the prisoners was a disputed subject.

The white woman was led to the tepee of a sturdy warrior and soon her muffled cries and the sounds of a desperate struggle within the rude habitation told of the terrible crime that was being therein enacted. But force

A Piegan Indian Family in Camp.

and might finally triumphed and as stillness again settled upon the scene, upon the pages of the Great Hereafter there was written the record of one more sin, one more gentle one whose life had been ruined to content the brutal lust of a depraved nature.

As I heard those cries and was myself surrounded by a band of those depraved creatures who were endeavoring to arrive at an agreement as to who should become possessed of my body, there arose within my heart a full realization of the danger and peril in which I stood, and with tears of fear and misery coursing down my cheeks I lifted my bound hands to God in prayer that I might be spared the fate of my unfortunate companion.

Struggling with difficulty to my knees I implored the old chief to save me, and, although he understood not the words I spoke, still my acts and looks told plainly of my meaning and, touched by my pleading, he beckoned the band from my side and leading them to where his ponies were grazing, selected the finest of the lot and delivered it to them as the price of my purchase. This, for the time being placed me more at ease, for as soon as the matter had thus been decided my feet were unbound, and I was led to the chief's tepee, where I was delivered into the care of his daughter, by whose side I passed the night.

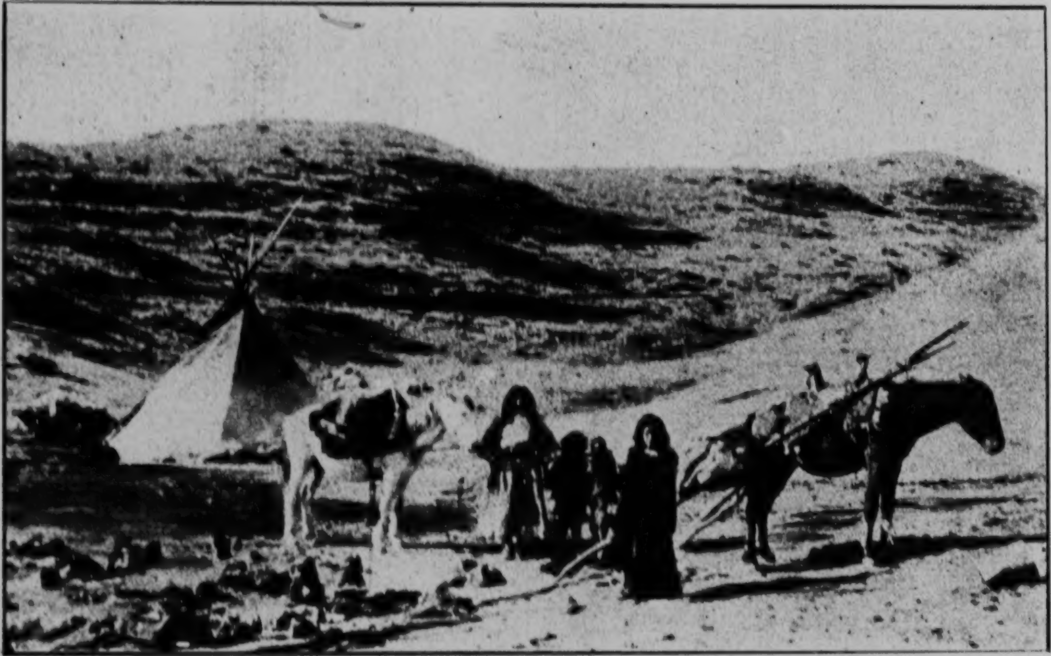
Early the next morning we broke camp and again moved on. The poor white woman was scarcely able to walk and the oldest girl, a child of about ten years of age, upon being led from the tent where she had been forced to remain during the night as a companion of one of the depraved brutes, fainted from weakness and abuse. The wretch whose fiendish acts had brought about this condition, angered by her weakness, stood for a moment over her prostrate form and then with a cry of devilish rage buried deep into her skull the blade of his battle-ax. A slight quiver of the childish body and the little sufferer was at rest.

I was again allowed to ride, but after traveling but a short distance the taunts of the remainder of the band who continuously made light of the chief's friendship for me, became unbearable to the old warrior and I was lowered to the ground and the corner of his blanket being placed in my hand, commanded to walk by the side of the pony.

By this time one of the younger children of the poor white woman had sickened and, being unabled to walk, was being carried by the fond mother, in addition to the burden of the nursing babe. As she would falter and faint from over-exertion, the wretches would ride by her side and with blows and prods from their spears urge her on.

But as the heat from the burning sun gradually grew more intense and prostrating in its effect, as mile after mile she wearily dragged along, there finally came a time when for her to proceed further under her burden was an impossibility, and with a low moan of anguish she sank by the side of the trail. Then was the brutal, depraved and hellish nature of those red brutes fully manifested.

Hastily dismounting they gathered about her, and after a short consultation, commenced the work of digging a small



Indians Moving Camp.

hole in the sand, their spear heads being employed in the capacity of spades or shovels. The excavation having been completed, the sick child was torn roughly from its mother's arms and placed within the same and covered with sand, with the exception of its poor little unprotected head, which was left protruding from the living grave, fully exposed to the rays of the gleaming sun above, and there left to die.

About the neck of the nursing babe was then placed a rawhide thong, several feet in length, the opposite end of which was securely tied to the body of a warrior mounted upon a horse. The child was placed in the mother's arms, and thus was she given the alternative of walking at a rate of speed equal to that maintained by the horse and horseman or, failing to do this, witness the death of her infant by being dragged along the ground by the thong about its neck.

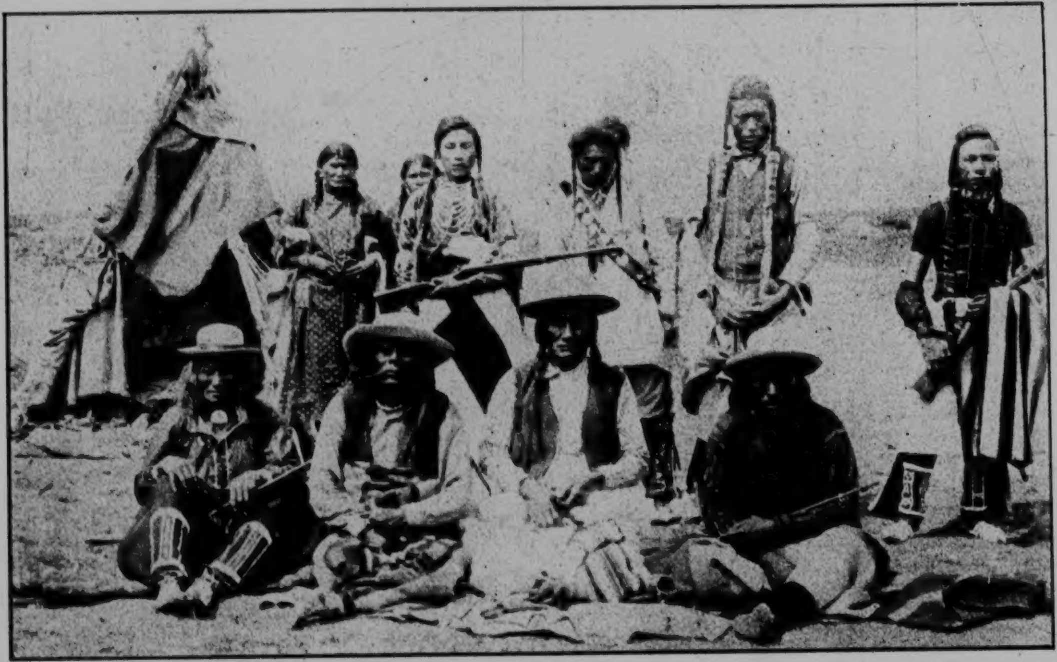
What, judge you, were the innermost feelings of that fond mother as she heard the cries of that dying child whom she was forced to leave thus upon those broad sandy plains to starve and die. Oh, God, could I have been given strength and power to stand between those minions of hell and the weak, helpless beings upon whom they were practicing such torture, willingly would I have sacrificed life itself.

At the close of the second day's travel we neared the foothills of a mountain range, and, ere night had set in, had penetrated these to a huge, deep canyon within which, in the midst of a large valley surrounding by towering bluffs and approachable only by way of the narrow gorge through which we passed, was the village of the tribe.

A mighty host of ugly squaws, dirty children and snarling curs welcomed the party and soon we were surrounded and made the central figures of the disgusting crowd. Their gutteral jargon seemed like the chatter of demons, and in the fast gathering gloom their dark and half naked bodies suggested the idea of wild and savage beasts.

The young braves who were not as yet of sufficient age to join in the war parties amused themselves with the captive children, torturing the poor little weary and footsore infants in a most cruel and heartless manner. The poor white woman, as the party halted, sank to the ground completely exhausted, her feet bleeding and blistered from the hot sun and rocks, her face swollen and eyes bloodshot from weeping and her arms almost completely paralyzed from the labor of carrying her infant during the long journey. About her gathered a group of squaws who seemed to delight in subjecting her to every conceivable form of torture. The poor little babe, with its neck chafed by the rawhide thong which had encircled it during the latter half of the day was crying and sobbing bitterly from pain and hunger. This appeared to anger the inhuman wretches, and, soon a large ugly squaw seized the child by the feet, pulled it violently from its mother's arms, and turning to a tree which stood near by, with one savage blow beat its brains out upon the sturdy pine.

The mother leaped to her feet and with a cry of anguish sprang torward her child, her arms outstretched and her swollen, bloodshot eyes reflecting the misery within her



Grosventre Indians in Camp.

heart, but rough hands seized her on every side and ere she could scarcely move she was forced to the ground. Without a struggle she suffered herself to be thus borne down, her face drawn and haggard, her eyes dry and tearless, and from that time on until Death's summons came—some weeks later—she appeared to be as one in a troubled dream and all oblivious of surroundings or occurring events.

As, during the night before, I was placed in charge of the chief's daughter, and with her shared a bed of skins and robes in the old warrior's tepee, but throughout the long, weary night my eyes were sleepless and my mind occupied with thoughts of the inhuman cruelty I had been forced to witness and wondering as to the fate I might myself expect to meet. But amid all this there came to me a realization of the kindness of Him who directs all things aright, in that I had been spared the agony of an experience such as that of my companion in captivity, and with a heart overflowing with thankfulness I raised my hands to the Almighty Father in thanksgiving that I had thus far been spared.

While the village yet lay within the shadow of the mountains before the rising sun the following morning, another war party arrived at the settlement. They too had been successful in the matter of captures and brought with them as prizes of war a young Mexican and an Indian warrior of another tribe, both of whom were quite badly wounded. The customary rejoicing over captured prisoners followed, but soon, after the morning meal had been partaken of, the camp assumed a more than usual quietness and throughout the day and the following night all were employed in the general occupation—that of sleeping and resting from the travel of the previous days

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INDIAN SCALP DANCE—A SCALP—DAILY LIFE OF THE INDIANS—A FEW MATCHES USED TO GREAT ADVANTAGE—I AM PRONOUNCED "A BAD SPIRIT", AND WITH THE OTHER PRISONERS AM DOOMED TO DEATH.

The second morning, however, ushered in a scene of preparation of unusual proportion, and after the completion of the morning meal the prisoners were all gathered to the center of the camp and seated at the foot of a tall pole from which dangled a half-dozen or more newly-taken scalps. The hideously painted and gaily bedecked Indian warriors then formed in a circle about us and soon the blood-curdling scalp dance was in progress, a description of which I shall at this time endeavor to give.

First, joining hands about this tall pole and the prisoners, the warriors circled around and about, uttering the weird, wild and devilish war whoop or battle cry of their tribe. Soon they would loosen their grasp upon each others hands and enter upon a series of maneuvers utterly impossible to describe.

Jumping, crouching, advancing, retreating, brandishing their battle axes high in the air with one hand, and with the other poising their spears above our heads they would spring upon us as we crouched in the midst of that circle of demons momentarily expecting a blow from their brutal arm. Retreating with a hideous smile upon their faces, they would again pause but a moment ere they once more rushed upon us, the while gleefully fondling the scalps of those they had captured and which were suspended from belts fastened about their bodies.

These scalps are considered by an Indian warrior the most valuable of all possessions and are looked upon by them as the only evidence of a warrior's bravery.

While the nature of a scalp is probably understood by nearly all who may peruse these pages, still for the information of such as are not familiar with the character of the same, I will say that it is the skin and a small tuft of hair cut from the top of a person's head. In taking a scalp the Indian grasps firmly a handful of hair on the extreme top of the head, at the same time with the other hand cutting the skin of the scalp in a circle about the hand and beneath the hair which he holds, removing the skin with the hair attached, from a spot about the size of the half of a person's hand. The bones of the skull are allowed to remain uninjured and the scalp consists of little more than the mere skin and clinging hair. After being removed the scalp is allowed to dry and is then treasured by the warrior whose property it is as a token of his bravery and ferocity. Following a battle and the capture of prisoners this dance is invariably indulged in as a manifestation of rejoicing over the success of the war party.

For several hours we were compelled to remain amid this circle and witness the rejoicing of our captors, but finally they became weary and exhausted, the dance was brought to a close and we were allowed to return to the tepees from which we had been called to witness this frolic of the brutes.

While scarcely a day passed but that some one of the prisoners would be subjected to some manner of torture, still taken as a whole, there soon settled about the camp a state or condition of affairs typical of the ordinary humdrum, lazy life of the Indians.

The women were of course at all times busily engaged in some occupation or another, for to them falls the lot of a veritable slave. By their hands are prepared all eatables, by them is gathered all food, they alone bring from the hunting grounds where slaughtered all game, care for the horses, make the clothing, make and pitch the tepees, and in fact do each and every particular labor and duty about the camp, for the Indian brave who will so much as raise his hand to assist in any duty which partakes in the slightest degree of manual labor is looked upon by his associates as a disgrace to the tribe of which he is a member.

An Indian woman is the most abject slave in existence, and, as if their customary degredation influenced their inborn instincts, they are also the most cruel, brutal and heartless of their tribe in the treatment of captives.

The food of the Indians during my stay among them consisted chiefly of the meats of the buffalo, antelope, etc., dried berries, dried roots and like articles. All was prepared in a filthy, slovenly manner, and only after experiencing the pangs of extreme hunger could I force myself to partake of the same, but strange as it may seem, so accustomed had I become to this food during my stay with them—a period of about six months—that for some little time after my rescue the food prepared by the whites was almost equally as repulsive.

But to return to the Indian camp—although not a pleasant duty on my part—I will resume the story of my captive life.

For some little time after my capture and our arrival at the village the influence of the chief's avowed and manifest friendship appeared to spread around and about me a protection from the grosser insults and outrages so frequently and regularly heaped upon the other captives Even the chief's son, whom I have heretofore mentioned as one of whom I stood in such fearful dread, appeared to lack courage to endeavor to carry out his cherished designs, and in consequence of this existing state of affairs I had begun to hope that these influences might be maintained until such time as Fate should provide for my rescue—for that I should be rescued I never for a moment doubted, although I must admit that at times such hope almost died within me.

Pondering over these events continually I finally arrived at the determination that rather than submit to the torture and death-preferable experience of my companion in misery—the white woman—I would end my life by means of the small stock of matches which I found I had safely hidden in my skirt—for I was aware of the poisonous nature of the composition which formed the "heads" of these useful little articles.

Thus, looking upon them as a possible means of escape from a torture far worse than death itself, I removed them from the pocket of my skirt, and with extreme caution secreted them in the hem of the garment, and, as time wore on more firm became my determination to seek their aid in case occasion should arise.

Some two or three weeks following the scalp dance a war party was formed, and, headed by the chief of whose family I was a member, went forth to battle the opposing forces of an adjoining tribe. The day upon which the start was made was a dark and dreary one and one intended to arouse within even the happy heart the most melancholy thoughts.

Surrounded as I was, separated from all I held near and dear, among savage, brutal foes, I gave way to the depression which settled over me and throughout the entire day I was unable to check the torrent of tears or hush the moans of bitter anguish which would in spite of every effort on my part arise from my down-cast and sorrowing heart.

As the day wore on and night approached the chief's son appeared more frequently than usual in the neighborhood of our tepee, and it was indeed with a sinking heart and a feeling of deadly fear that I closely watched his movements and thought of the peril which I knew was hovering about me. Evening came at last, and as if by preconcerted arrangement, the sweetheart of the chief's daughter appeared upon the scene and soon they wandered away, leaving me alone at the tepee, for the chief's squaw had left that morning for some place unknown to me and had not as yet returned to camp.

Almost simultaneously with the departure of the chief's daughter and her sweetheart the dark form of my persecutor appeared at the entrance to the tepee, paused a moment in the narrow opening and then silently crept into the darkness within.

My dread and fear of that depraved brute as I sat crouching and cowering on the farther side of that rude habitation and awaited his approach nearly turned my mind, but, as if by magic there flashed through my bewildered brain the realization of my impending fate, and as quickly did I resolve to end my life rather than become the victim of the heartless brute.

This determination I had previously formed in my mind, but, although his visit was an expected event, his sudden appearance had for the moment driven the thought from my brain. Within my hands, which were yet damp from wiping the tears from my face, were tightly clasped the heads of a portion of my treasured stock of matches, and, with a mental prayer to God that the poison might act with rapidity, and a fond farewell to mother and home, I raised them to my lips and strove to swallow them, but as they touched my tongue the nauseous odor and taste caused me to spit them from my mouth with an exclamation of disgust, for although I had known that to do so would be to forfeit my life it would have been an impossibility for me to have forced them down my throat in opposition to the action of my weakened stomach.

As the portions of matches escaped my lips they fell to the ground before me a flashing, glimmering mass, having been dampened by the contact with my moist hands and the saliva within my mouth, and with a cry of intense fear the Indian sprang from my side, where he had by this time approached, and screaming and yelling at the top of his voice, bolted from the tepee.

A glance at the dampened matches which lay before me at once led me to an understanding of the cause of his fear and with joy and new hope uppermost in my heart I quickly gathered them to my hands again and dampening them freshly rolled them between my palms.

The frightened Indian soon aroused the entire camp and within a few moments the tepee in which I was confined was surrounded by a howling, jabbering and excited band of men, women and children. Sitting in the darkness I would await the appearance of their dark forms at the entrance and then, opening wide my hands, would expose their inner surface, lightening and flashing with the dampened phosphorus, to their view, and with a cry of fear they would rush from the tepee.

Thus did I keep those ignorant and supertitious red devils at bay during the period of several hours, when finally a severe thunderstorm arose and they left me in solitude and returned to their camp fires, but throughout the entire night I remained awake lest, falling asleep I should be found unprepared for their approach and fall victim to their will.

Camp was astir early the next morning and as the day wore on I noticed that preparations were under way for some unusual event, nor did I witness these actions without fear and trembling, for amid all the busy hurry and bustle the Indians would pause in their work and glance frequently in my direction, the while keeping up an excited conversation and jabbering.

Round about a large pine tree the squaws piled armload after armload of dry branches and limbs gathered from the adjacent forest. This pile having reached a satisfactory height they next proceeded to a level spot near by, where they marked upon the sod two long parallel lines about six feet apart.

This work having been completed the entire band was summoned to the scene, and the prisoners, including myself, were led forth to the spot. I then knew, that, angered and frightened by my acts of the previous night, and believing that I was possessed of the qualities of a bad spirit and fearing that I would bring disaster to the camp and possibly employ my power to liberate not only myself but the other prisoners, they had decided to put us all to death. This supposition was finally proven to be well founded.

CHAPTER IX.

The Mexican Burned at the Stake—The Indian Captive Beaten to Death—Running the Gauntlet—I Escape Death, but am Badly Wounded—A Long Sickness—I Prove Myself a "Good Spirit".

The captive Mexican and Indian whom I had not before seen since their arrival in camp, but both of whom had by this time almost fully recovered from their wounds, were placed with the rest of the prisoners.

Soon four stalwart braves approached and, taking the Mexican by the arms and shoulders, roughly led and pushed him to the foot of the pile of brush about the tall pine. Tripping his feet from beneath him they threw him heavily to the ground and with deliberation firmly bound with rawhide thongs his hands and feet. He was then lifted to the pile of dry boughs and placed in an upright position with his back against the tree, in which position he was securely bound, bands being placed about his body at the ankles, knees, hips and shoulders. All preparations for burning the unfortunate man having been made, the Indians then retreated some little distance and soon formed a circle about the tree, in which circle the prisoners were all included, and with slow tread proceeded to march around and around, amusing themselves the while by pointing at the tortured man, distorting their faces in the most horrible manner and by sign and voice taunting and deriding him in every conceivable way. Finally all came to a halt, and while there prevailed the stillness of death itself there strode forth from the circle a sturdy warrior—he who had effected the capture of the condemned man—who advanced slowly to the side of the prisoner. Stooping, he gathered from a limb a small quantity of dry moss and with the aid of flints soon succeeded in igniting the same, Placing this amid the dry boughs, he stepped back and, with a smile upon his lips, watched the flames as they slowly but steadily increased in volume and spread from twig to twig.

As the flame started the Mexican glanced calmly about him, his gaze finally resting upon my form. As our eyes met he spoke in his native language—which I learned to understand while in New Mexico—saying, "Adieu little sweetheart. Should your life be spared, avenge my death. Be brave and outwit the red devils for a time and you will be saved. Tell my people I died like a brave man. Adieu."

Even as he spoke the flames were leaping about his person. Higher and higher they rose, now leaping and crackling about his ankles and lower limbs, now blazing rith intensity about his arms and body, and finally, as a ust of wind came hurrying along, streaming with intense eat far above his head and enveloping his quivering, listered and tortured person in their fiery fold.

Sickened by the horrible spectacle I covered my eyes rith my hands in an endeavor to blot from my view the errible scene, but almost before my hands had touched my ace they were grabbed by a warrior and thrust to my side, rhile another standing behind me placed his hands on ither side of my head and so held it as to compel me to ook in the direction of the burning man.

As I looked the second time, through the flame I could imly see the blackened and charred form of the now dead an, and in but a short time the flesh gradually slipped rom the bones in places, and falling to the fire beneath, rould be devoured by the fierce flames. But a brief time nd the rawhide with which the body was bound to the ree had parted, and the charred frame toppled forward nd fell face down amidst the coals and ashes at its feet.

The fire gradually subsided from a vast volume of leaping ames to a glowing mass of gleaming coals, and soon the nly remaining evidence of the fiendish crime which had ut just been perpetrated, was a bed of light, flaky ashes mid which might, here and there, be seen a glittering coal f fire and a blackened, charred and half-burned bone.

The day was now drawing to a close—for much time had een employed in the preparation for and the enactment of he event just described—and no time was wasted after the lose of that scene until another of equally as brutal a character was arranged for.

Leading the prisoners to the vicinity of the spot where had been marked upon the sod the lines or paths I have heretofore mentioned, and placing about them a small body-guard, the Indians proceeded to form themselves in two parallel lines, facing each other and with toes to the marks or lines upon the sod.

Thus ranged they formed two ranks several hundred feet in length on either side, and between which was a narrow passage way or "gauntlet." Every man, woman and child in that array of demons was armed with a weapon of some character, either a spear, battle-ax, tomahawk, huge club or a missile of like nature, and through between the ranks of those bloodthirsty devils, exposed to the blows of the heartless wretches, were we doomed to proceed until by their blows we had been beaten to death—for to once enter that fatal gauntlet was as sure and certain death as to step before the roaring cannon's mouth.

All were pushing and crowding for place at the end where the prisoners would first enter the gauntlet, for all were anxious and eager to be the first to have an opportunity to deal the initial blow upon the defenseless head of the one whose life they were to take.

At last all was in readiness and the Indian captive was commanded to prepare for the race for life—for in reality it was a race for life, as the custom of the Indians provided that in case a prisoner succeeded in passing through between the lines the entire length and was still able to walk upon reaching the opposite end from that at which he entered, then would he be given his liberty.

Well did that Indian warrior, as he stood there, with head erect, hands tightly clenched and teeth firmly set know that he was facing death, but never did he waver or falter, but, on the contrary, as the word was given, he sprang boldly forward and with the ferocity of a wild beast fought his way, inch by inch, far down the line, but it was beyond human endurance to withstand the shower of blows rained upon him from every side, and at last, bruised and bleeding and completely exhausted, he sank in the midst of his foes and was beaten to death.

I was now selected as the next victim and was commanded to make ready for the race. Again the dispute arose among the Indians as to position in the ranks, and while this was under way I noticed that which caused me to almost cry out with joy and thanksgiving—the approach of the chief and his war party, who could be seen galloping toward us but scarcely a mile distant down the valley.

At the head of the ranks this time stood my deadly foe, the chief's son, and though I was some little distance as yet from him, yet I could perceive that his eyes glittered and glistened with the hatred of a devil, while a smile of fiendish glee overspread his ugly face. In every possible way I sought to delay the start until the arrival of the chief, but every instant the Indians were becoming more and more impatient and soon the command of my bodyguard was emphasized by a savage kick, and away I sped.

I fully realized that my only hope for life lay in my agility and presence of mind, and as I flew along over the short distance intervening between the starting point and where the foremost of the brutes held his tomahawk aloft fully prepared to deal me a fatal blow, I formed in my mind a plan of action by which I hoped to outwit them and reach the presence of the chief, who was by this time but a comparatively short distance from us.

Running at the top of my speed I made straight for the opening between the two ranks, never varying in the slightest degree from my course until I was within but a few feet of the entrance to the pathway, when with a sudden spring to the right I turned from my course and flew with all possible speed in the direction of the old warrior.

So sudden was the movement that ere the expectant savages realized my intent I had gained several feet upon the foremost of my pursuers ere they turned and gave chase, but with a howl of rage they followed in my tracks and just as I reached the side of the chief's pony I was overtaken by the Indian who had stood first in the ranks, and received from his tomahawk a vicious blow on the right side of the neck, but fortunately the blade of the weapon struck in a slanting direction and thus failed of fatal effect.

Upon regaining consciousness I found myself in the chief's tepee with that person, his daughter and the medicine man of the tribe by my side. The wound in my neck had been sewed with sinew—which, by the way, is a small, thread-like cord taken from the spine of a deer—and about the same, to check the flow of blood, was wrapped a portion of my outer garments which had been torn for that purpose.

For several days I lay in a half-conscious condition, but at last all was oblivion, and when I had again recovered my reason I was made to understand by the chief's daughter that many moons had passed and that the sun had risen and set a vast number of times since the date of my receiving the injury.

I was weak and emaciated, my lips were parched and swollen and my every symptom bespoke the presence of a raging fever. Soon, however, I began to improve and within the course of a week or two was able to raise myself upon my elbow and partake of a gruel or broth which was prepared for me.

It was at this time that I learned the fate of the white woman. She, as well as two of the three remaining children, had been stricken with a severe attack of fever and died while I was lying at the point of death. Thus, upon recovering—which required several weeks time—I found myself the only prisoner in the camp, with the single exception of the twelve-year-old son of the dead woman.

Hardly had I regained sufficient strength to move about the tepee before the chief, his daughter and the medicine man again gathered about me one evening, and with signs and gestures and with what I could understand—and I could now understand considerable—of their language, asked that I again bring the spirits to my presence and throw fire from my hands. I consented to do so, and at the same time told them as best I could that I was a good spirit and not a bad one.

That evening I again made use of the matches and while my hands and face were aglow with the dampened phosphorus, approached each of the frightened wretches and, placing one hand over his heart and the other one over mine, told them as well as I could that I would bring them good luck so long as they treated me kindly.

The ruse proved a successful one and from that time forward until my rescue I was the recipient of only the most kindly treatment from all members of the tribe, for both the chief and the medicine man—the two highest dignitaries of the tribe—at once proclaimed that I was a good spirit and that no one must dare maltreat me under penalty of death.

I was at once presented with a handsome suit of buckskin clothes fashioned after those worn by the chief's daughter; at my command and for my own exclusive use was provided a beautiful pony, and with the chief's daughter as a companion I was allowed the liberty of the camp. Under these conditions it only remained for me to amuse myself as best I could and study the language and peculiar customs of the savage tribe with whom I abode.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUN DANCE—SELECTING YOUNG WARRIORS—DRIVING AWAY THE "EVIL SPIRIT"—DETAILS OF THE METHODS OF SELF-TORTURE—SELECTING A MEDICINE MAN—THE BELIEF OF THE INDIANS REGARDING MEDICINE MEN—"AN INDIAN IS AN INDIAN".

While I might write much relative to these customs, still the two which savor of a barbarous nature most strongly and which are seldom if ever witnessed by whites—unless perchance they happen to be, as I was, in captivity at the time they are indulged in—are the sun dance and the ceremony of selecting medicine men.

The sun dance was in the days of which I speak held annually by the Indians and was accompanied by the most horrible forms of self-torture. The ceremony was instituted as a means of selecting the braves from the "squaw men", the warriors from the "stay-at-homes."

The medicine man of the tribe invariably officiates as master of ceremonies, his first duty being to lead to the medicine lodge all the young men who are candidates for self-torture and for the honors to be bestowed by the chiefs on those who can endure them most manfully. Each one's body is nearly nude and covered with war paint of various hues. Each carries his medicine bag, spear, bow and arrow, etc.

After the medicine lodge has been entered the candidates place themselves in reclining postures; around its sides, and suspended over the head of each are his weapons and medicine bag. The master of ceremonies lies in the center of the lodge, with his medicine pipe in his hand, crying to the Great Spirit incessantly, watching the young men and preventing their communication with persons outside, or their escape from the lodge, for four days and nights, during which time they are not allowed to eat, or drink, or sleep.

About the floor of the lodge lie a number of articles of great veneration, including which are four sacks of water which the Indians claim are "waters from the four quarters of the world," and which have been there "ever since the settling down of the waters."

During the first three days of this ceremony some novel and peculiar amusements are indulged in at the open area which marks the center of the village. One is the bull dance, the principals of which are eight men, dancing the buffalo dance, with the skins of buffaloes on them and branches of green willow on their backs.

Dividing into four pairs, they take their positions on the four sides of a small platform around the edge of which is hung a fringe of scalps, and between each group is a single man, making an even dozen in all. The medicine man leaves the lodge, and leaning against the platform, the while toying with the fringe of scalps with one hand and holding his pipe in the other, wails a most pitiful lament.

The sacks of water are brought from the medicine lodge and four old men pound them with drumsticks, which, in addition to rattles and the musicians' voices, constitutes the music for the dancers. More or less often does this dance take place each day—the first day being given to each of the four cardinal points; on the second day twice to each, three times to each on the third and on the fourth day four times. In the meantime the candidates are fasting within the medicine lodge.

On the fourth day the ceremony of driving the "Evil Spirit" from the village is enacted. During the last of the bull dances, just described, the whole village is apparently greatly alarmed by the appearance of a man who is discovered running toward the crowd. His dress consists solely of a coat of black paint, and as he nears the gathering he rushes hither and thither in pursuit of the women, who fall over each other in their efforts to avoid him.

He is checked by the master of ceremonies thrusting the medicine pipe before him. For some time the two stand glaring at each other, the intruder, although frowning vengeance, being held in check by the medicine man, with the charm of his sacred medicine pipe.

At last the medicine man wins the battle and from that time forward the "Evil Spirit" is no longer feared, but, on the contrary, is the laughing stock of the women, who take from him the wand which he carried in his hand, at the same time reviling him and throwing sand in his eyes and smearing his body with grease. His power gone, his strength exhausted, he attempts to rush off but is followed by the women and girls, who beat him with sticks and stones.

With the closing of this scene, preparations are at once made for the cruelties which are to be inflicted upon the candidates in the medicine lodge.

Around about tall poles, which have previously been placed in position, forms a circle of men who are to take part in the infliction of tortures, the master of ceremonies, the musicians, the chief, and the doctors who are to pass upon the comparative degree of fortitude with which the candidates stand the ordeal. Still farther back stand the warriors of the tribe, then the younger males, next the women and girls, and forming the outer circle are the young children.

From the poles in the center hang long rawhide thongs, securely fastened at the top of the pole. At the base of each pole two men take positions, one with a scalping knife which has been ground sharp on both edges and then hacked and notched by the blade of another to make it produce as much pain as possible, and the other with a bunch of splints.

One at a time the candidates, who are already emaciated with fasting, thirsting and waking for nearly four nights and days, advance and place themselves in position for torture.

An inch or more of skin and flesh on each shoulder or each breast is taken up between the thumb and finger by the man who holds the knife, and the ragged blade is thrust through the flesh below the fingers holding it, and as it is slowly withdrawn is followed with a splint thrust through the wound by the other man.

Two of the rawhide thongs are then tied to the splints. Splints are also passed through the arms below the shoulders, through the thighs and the lower part of the legs in a similar manner, and upon these are hung the man's bow and arrow, tomahawk, etc. Through the wounds in the lower part of the legs is then thrust bands of rawhide which are firmly and securely tied, thus preventing the tortured man from stepping.

All having been thus treated, the musicians are commanded to commence the music, which is the signal for the candidates to begin the self-torture which they have chosen to inflict.

Weaving, plunging, swaying from side to side, the young brave endeavors to tear from his flesh the splints which have been placed therein, and as the agony thus occasioned becomes unbearable he bursts out in the most heart-rending cries with prayers to the Great Spirit to sustain him in this dreadful trial.

As the candidates grow weaker and weaker, the men who have been selected to assist in the ceremony, spring forward and with willing hands throw the body of the tortured man backward and forward and from right to left until he faints and hangs apparently a lifeless corpse. During this ordeal, which usually lasts from ten to fifteen minutes, his tormentors keep close watch of him and when all signs of life have disappeared he is carefully lowered to the ground, where he lays like a corpse.

The splints are pulled from the breast or shoulders and he is thus loosened from the rawhide cords. With their weights attached, all the other splints are left hanging in the flesh. He lies in this condition until he gets strength to move, for no one is allowed to assist or offer him aid, as he is now enjoying the most valued privilege an Indian can boast of—that of "trusting his life to the keeping of the Great Spirit in this time of suffering and extreme peril."

At last, as his strength returns, he crawls, with the weights still hanging to his body, to where an Indian is sitting, with a tomahawk in his hand, before a small block. Holding up a finger of one hand, he offers it as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit, lays it upon the block and the other chops it off. No bandages are applied, no arteries taken up; the wounds are left for the Great Spirit to cure.

During all this the chief and medicine man and other dignitaries are calmly observing the action of the various candidates, in order to decide who are the bravest and stoutest hearted, that they may know whom to appoint the leader of a war party or place at the most honorable or desperate post, and the women are chanting, in time with the weird music, a wild, wailing song, as they sway their bodies from side to side and forward and back, at the same time shading their eyes with their hand and slightly raising and lowering their bodies with a slight bend of their knees.

As soon as six or eight of the candidates have passed through the torture inflicted by being tied to the pole, etc., they creep, with their weights still hanging to them, to the vicinity of the scalp-fringed platform around which the bull dance took place.

Here about twenty young men join hands in a circle around the platform and run round and about the same with all possible speed. Outside the circle each candidate is taken in charge by two young men who rush him around the moving circle until he falls. His conductors and tormentors still rush around, drawing him after them until the splints are torn from the flesh,

No one can help him even yet but the Great Spirit. He is left lying upon the ground until he is able to crawl of his own accord to his tepee, where friends and relatives await him and, after removing the rawhide thongs from the wounds in the lower part of his legs, at once tenderly care for and nurse him.

Such was the sun dance in the years when the red man was a warrior, and while I was a captive in their midst, and before the civilizing influences of the white man had produced its effect; and such was the nature of the fiends incarnate with whom I was forced to remain for a period or nearly six months.

The ceremony of selecting a medicine man, while it is not accompanied by a like amount of self-torture with the sun dance, is still, nevertheless, a most barbarous practice.

As, in preparing for the sun dance, the candidates are compelled to fast prior to the ceremony for a period of four days and nights. While the candidates are thus employed, the squaws of the village gather a large quantity of bowlders and rocks and build in the center of the village a huge oven, of sufficient height to allow of a man standing upright in the same, and covering a ground space of some 4x10 feet. This is plastered with mud and made as nearly air tight as possible, with the exception of a small opening left on one side near the top through which the smoke from the fire which is to be built therein is to escape, and an entrance of sufficient size to admit of the passage of a single man at a time.

When this is completed, within the same is placed a large quantity of dried grasses, roots, leaves and herbs, which have heretofore been gathered by the squaws for this purpose, and in addition dried boughs and limbs are placed in the oven and ignited.

Thus, until the time for the testing of the candidates arrives, is a roaring fire maintained within the rude furnace or oven, and by the time the date fixed for the ceremony has arrived the same is thoroughly heated through and through and filled with the sickening odor of the burned grasses and herbs.

The entrance, which has up to this time been closed with a large rock, is then opened and about the floor of the oven is laid, amid the ashes and coals, large rocks and bowlders.

All is now ready for the important event, and soon the candidates, weakened and thirsting, are led forth from the medicine lodge and ushered to the furnace. One by one they creep through the narrow opening to the heat within, until three have entered, when the large rock which acts as a door to the entrance, is placed securely in position and those without await the outcome.

Round about on the rocks within, breathing the stifling atmosphere and suffering from the intense heat, the would-be medicine men walk until, unable to stand the torture longer, they creep to the entrance and apply for freedom. Through a small opening between the rocks, of just sufficient size to admit of a view of the interior, the chief of the tribe continually peers, observing closely the actions of those within. Should a candidate be overcome by the heat, the signal is promptly given by this dignitary and the unconscious man is quickly dragged from the furnace.

Beside the entrance sit three chosen men, and as the candidates first enter the oven each selects a particular one. As they disappear through the entrance, on their way to the heat within, each of these three men cuts with a knife which he holds in his hand, a notch in a stick held in the opposite hand, and, at regular intervals thereafter, until the reappearance of the candidates, the sticks are notched, thus recording the space of time each has withstood the trying ordeal.

Thus, three by three, are the candidates compelled to give practical evidence of their fortitude and power of endurance, and, when all have undegone the torture, the records are compared and examined, and he who has for the longest space of time withstood the heat is selected as the one ordained by the Great Spirit to act as healer and counselor for the tribe, and for the remainder of his natural life occupies the position of a dignitary equal in importance with the chief.

The belief of the Indians relative to these medicine men is indeed peculiar. They, in their ignorance and superstition, are of the opinion that the body of the selected man is thoroughly impregnated with the mysterious properties of each and every herb and root which has been burned within the furnace, and that the Great Spirit at the time the man was amid the heat of the oven's interior, endowed him with the power of ascertaining by a mere touch of the hand the ailment of a sick person and the particular herb or medicine necessary to be used to effect a cure.

In their belief the medicine man also has the power to ward off all evil spirits and influences, protect all from harm and danger, and in fact perform all things usually accredited to the power of spirits. All members of the tribe look up to him as a being far their superior, and in their blind ignorance worship at his feet.

One more incident which came under my observation, and which fully illustrates the nature of an Indian, I wish to mention, after which the manner of my rescue will be taken up.

While upon a hunting trip, a small band of the tribe by chance found an Indian woman of a neighboring tribe separated from her companions, and effected her capture She was brought to our camp, but in some unknown manner escaped a few days later. The particulars of her homeward journey, after escape, I afterwards learned from reliable sources.

Leaving our camp she crept through thickets and brush for several miles, finally coming to a small stream, on the banks of which there lived a white settler and his wife Beside a small spring which flowed from the mountain side this escaping captive halted, and there, amid the surroundings of nature alone, gave birth to a male child.

Taking from her body a portion of her scanty clothing she wrapped the infant in the same, with her hands hollowed in the sand a small excavation, and, covering the little one with dry leaves and pine boughs, left it, well knowing that those who came to the spring for water would find the babe, and trusting to their kindness for its future care. Leaving the infant thus she proceeded on her way and ultimately joined her tribe.

The deserted child was found by the wife of the settler and tenderly cared for. The good people soon learned to love the bright little fellow, and, being without children of their own, indulged him in every desire as far as lay within their power. He was given a good education, well provided with clothes and all necessary articles, and everything within the power of his foster-parents was done to make his life and home pleasant.

But "what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh", is an old and familiar adage, and in this case, at least, proved eminently true. Reaching his majority, the young Indian at once bade adieu to those who had thus befriended him and hurried to the tepees of his tribe, where he soon became happy in the possession of a filthy, greasy squaw, and entered fully into the barbarous customs of his nation.

There may be exceptions, but experience has taught me that an Indian is an Indian in every sense of the word, wherever he may be found, and amid whatever surroundings he may be placed.

CHAPTER XI.

A DISCOVERY THAT BRINGS ME HOPE—ARRIVAL OF TROOPS IN CAMP—"YOU WANT TO GO? YOU WANT TO STAY?" —"BE BRAVE"—END OF CAPTIVITY—MY BROTHER ALIVE—HOME AGAIN.

The summer was fast wearing away, and although I knew by the withering grass and coloring leaves that the fall season was with us and the long winter months fast approaching, still as to the exact month or day I was ignorant of the date, when one day upon the return of a war party, I made a discovery which led me to hope that my rescue would be an event of the near future.

Carried across the backs of the ponies from which they had been shot were several dead Indians, and the party also brought with them several warriors who were badly wounded. These men were all wounded by bullets, and this circumstance, taken in connection with the fact that in the possession of one of the warriors I noticed a small piece of blue "soldier cloth" and a brass button, furnished me with a conclusive proof that the band had been engaged in a battle with the soldiers, and also, judging from the number of killed and wounded and the absence of several of the party, I arrived at the conclusion that the battle had been a disastrous one to the Indians.

My little companion, the chief's daughter, soon came to me with the news of the battle—for by this time I had learned to talk and understand quite well their language—and told me much relative to the affair. She also, with tears coursing down her cheeks, informed me of the capture of her sweetheart by the soldiers. While I appeared to be in sympathy with her in her troubles, still, were the truth to be told, I never heard more welcome news, nor that which caused me more happiness and joy, for I was confident that now that the troops were in the immediate neighborhood, my rescue would soon be brought about.

That night additional sentinels or pickets were placed about the camp, as was the case the following day.

Late in the afternoon word was conveyed to the camp by one of these guards that soldiers were approaching. Amid all the hurry and excitement of the preparation for an attack, during which the women and children were driven to the tepees, I was also commanded to go within and the chief's daughter covered me with robes.

There I lay for some time, but was finally aware that the soldiers were in camp, for the sound of their horses' hoofs was plainly heard as I lay with my ear to the ground intently listening.

Shortly the robes were removed from above, and looking up I saw the old chief standing over me. He beckoned me to arise, and as he took my hands in his he said, "You want to stay? You want to go?"

I hardly knew what answer to give, for I dared not offend him, and while I studied for a reply, he continued, 'You want to go? Cry much. You laugh glad, braves mad, kill pale-faces. White Lilly now go, come back some time. Come," and taking me by the hand he led me from the tepee to the presence of the soldiers, who, mounted upon their horses, were formed in a hollow square, with carbines in hand, near the center of the village.

As we neared the ranks an officer stepped forth bearing a flag of truce, and by his side walked an Indian brave—the sweetheart of the chief's daughter. As the chief placed my hand in that of the officer, the latter stooped over me and in a whisper said, "Be brave. Cling to the chief as if you wished to remain." Following his directions I turned and threw my arms about the old warrior's body and clung to him closely.

This pleased the Indians as nothing else could have done, and as the officer strove to loosen my hold they gathered around in a threatening manner, until, receiving a glance from my rescuer which told me more plainly than words that the time for my departure had come, I turned and walked with him to the side of his horse, was lifted to the saddle of the animal, which he mounted, and was soon on the way from that detestable spot, and near me, safe in the arms of a soldier, was the little white boy.

As we a few moments later rounded a turn in the canyon, which hid us from view of the village, the horses were urged forward at their utmost speed, and by the time darkness had overtaken us we were many miles separated from the Indian village.

There, as we halted for rest and food, for the first time was I afforded an opportunity to speak to my brother, who was a member of the company of soldiers—a detachment of the Denver Volunteers.

My brother, at the time we were attacked, he now told me, lay for some time unconscious from the effects of the blow he received when knocked from the wagon. When he finally revived, he found that the Indians had disappeared, and with caution he crawled away, finally making good his escape.

He found that not only had the settler—whose family were captives with me—been murdered, but also that a party of immigrants who were stopping there for the day, had also been massacred, their scalped and mutilated bodies to the number of fifteen or twenty lying about the cabin as they had been left by their slayers.

Following the small stream, and traveling only by night, he, in a few days, fell in with a company of soldiers, and from that time until my rescue was engaged in searching for me, finally learning of my whereabouts from the chief's daughter's sweetheart, who was captured by the troops.

After a hurried meal the journey was again taken up—no delay being permitted on account of the small number of troops and consequent danger of attack—and early the following morning we joined the main body of troops.

Here, at the headquarters of the regiment, from which were frequently sent out small detachments of troops for the rescue of Indian captives, the little white boy died, but I remained for several weeks—until I had regained a portion of my lost strength—and then, as opportunity arose, returned to my home.

I cannot, nor shall I attempt to describe that home-coming and the rejoicing indulged in by my mother over my return, but a faint idea of the joyousness of the occasion may be imagined by the reader when I say that although my head was bald and bare—my hair having fallen out after my attack of fever in the Indian camp—my body emaciated, my face tanned and haggard and my general appearance repulsive rather than attractive, my educated, haughty and refined sister-in-law clasped me in her arms, and drawing my head to her bosom, rained kiss after kiss upon my cheeks and brow, and for days petted and feasted me with kind words.

It was the kindest welcome I ever received, and I can remember now that at the time she was fondling me I thought the perfume she had so lavishly sprinkled upon her clothing was the richest and most odoriferous of any that I had ever scented. Of course I was loving my dear sister-in-law all this time with all my heart, but then you know that perfume was so fragrant I could not but notice it.

The following winter—for it was now late in the fall—

I remained at home and assisted in the care of the house, but throughout the entire season I suffered from the effects of the terrible ordeal through which I had passed, and was able to do but little other than the very lightest work.

With the coming of spring, however, I had almost regained my customary health and strength.

At this time there occurred an event which robbed us of our home, separated the various members of the family to a certain extent, and marked out for each of us a new pathway and future course through life.

The little city of Denver, as I have before stated, was built at that time immediately at the forks of the Platte River and Cherry Creek. The latter, at the point where Denver was built was nothing more than a dry, sandy creek bed and along the banks of this, and even in the bed of the creek itself, were houses built. For years prior to our locating there no record was had of the stream having been other than in the condition in which we found it, and as the location was a fine one, here our house was erected.

On the evening of which I speak, mother and I were across the Platte River, in the city proper, on some errand connected with the purchase of provisions, when, as we started upon our return, quite late in the evening, we could hear, far up Cherry Creek, the rumbling and roaring of a mighty torrent of water as it came tearing down the dry creek bottom in the direction of our home, the same being the destroying force of a huge cloudburst.

Before we could reach our home the water was almost waist deep, and floating past us on every hand we could see, by the dim evening light, wreckage of houses, barns, furniture, etc., and above the roar of the waters was to be heard the cries and shrieks of women and children, the neighing of horses, the bellowing of horned stock, and many and various other sounds which told of the death and devastation the cruel waves were causing.

Men, mounted upon ponies and horses, were directing their half-walking, half-swimming mounts from place to place, endeavoring to rescue those who were unable to battle with the waves unassisted, and to one of those brave men were we indebted for the saving of our lives.

Riding to our cabin he allowed mother and I to mount the horse, while he walked and swam by its side, directing its course until the higher land was reached, where we were left in company with such others as had been fortunate enough to escape, among the number being my brother and his wife.

There we were forced to remain without shelter and with our wet clothes still upon us until the following morning. For many days we were all compelled to camp as best we could upon the foothills, being furnished with food by settlers in the neighboring country, and between two and three weeks had passed ere the waters had subsided, and the entire party of unfortunates proceeded to the city and were kindly sheltered and fed by the good people of the town.

Every building standing within the heretofore dry creek, or upon the immediate banks of the same, including the office of the Rocky Mountain News, the Methodist church and a large number of dwellings, was totally destroyed by the flood.

Several lives were lost in the waters, and many who were forced to undergo the hardship of remaining wet and cold upon the foothills during the time we were there camped, sickened, and subsequently died.

As to the loss we had suffered but few words need be employed—all was gone; house, furniture, clothing provisions, what funds we had possessed, and in fact everything with the exception of the clothing we wore.

Such being the case the necessity at once arose of seeking employment of some kind.

Among our acquaintances was a wagon-master, and to him my unmarried brother applied for work. The man knew of our misfortune, and, immediately employing my brother, at the same time offered me employment in the capacity of cook for the train. I accepted the offer, and when the train of one hundred wagons, each drawn by six teams, started on its long journey across the plains a week later I was the only female in that party of one hundred and sixty persons—mother and brother and his wife taking up their abode on a farm or ranch a few miles from Denver—and for many a long, dreary week, month and year thereafter my home was the wide, far-stretching plains and my abode the canvas-covered wagon in a freighting train.

CHAPTER XII.

Anecdotes of Incidents and Events Participated in and Witnessed During Twelve Round Trips Across the Plains From the Missouri River to Rocky Mountain Points.

The life was one accompanied not only by hardship and peril, but at times much of an amusing nature.

The men were rough, uneducated and unrefined, but still, during the time I was with that wagon train—for twelve long, tedious round trips from the Missouri river to Rocky Mountain points—not one word of an insulting nature did I receive, not one act was there committed in my presence which I could resent or interpret as intended as an insult.

'Tis true these men were profane and addicted to the use of liquor and tobacco, in some cases to an extreme degree, but at the start winning their esteem and respect as I did, they would, I believe, have forfeited their lives had it been necessary to do so in order to protect me from harm and insult.

My mother used to say to me when a child, "Libby, remember a lady can be a lady wherever she may be," and my experience has taught me that no truer words were ever spoken, and that so long as a woman so conducts herself as to win and merit the esteem and respect of those with whom she is associated, she need never fear but that she will be treated as a lady.

I have lived all my life among those reputed to be rough, uncivilized and uncouth, but I defy the world to produce a class of people who as a rule are more endowed with true, noble and praiseworthy qualities of manliness; who will more quickly aid in righting a wrong; who will more gallantly espouse the cause of a slandered woman, or who will more willingly extend a helping hand to a brother in need and misfortune, than the sturdy pioneers of the far west.

Writers have searched with a persistence worthy of a far better cause, have drawn from their store-houses of imagination vast quantities of fanciful material, and with the pencil of untruth painted word pictures calculated to convey the idea and impression that the average old-timer of the Rockies was little short of an ugly, vicious, degraded specimen of humanity roaming about the canyons and cliffs in a state of uncivilized ferociousness.

This is all nonsense. These men were plain, fair-minded men, with minds bent upon the acquisition of wealth, for the possession of which they were content to brave the

A Team in a Freighting Train.

hardships and perils of a new country, and withal governed solely by their innermost instincts of right and wrong.

Desperate, vicious, unprincipled and degraded men were as much despised by them as by their brethren of the States, and in proof of this I have only to point to the record of criminals hung or shot in punishment for the crimes they had committed, for the law had naught to do with their execution—their death and the avenging of the crimes they had committed was always at the hands of men who considered it their duty to see that right prevailed and crime was checked.

SLADE'S KEEPSAKES.

Along the trail from Denver to the Missouri River had by this time been built several station houses or stopping places for wagon trains on their way across the plains. At these stations a small hut would be erected from sod cut in squares and piled one upon another and then plastered with mud.

A corral or enclosure would also be built near the house in which the stock of the train might be placed for safekeeping during the time of an attack by the Indians.

An effort was always made by those traveling to reach one of these station houses for the night's camping, if possible, owing to the protection which they afforded from attacks by the Indians.

On one of our trips and while camped at one of these stations there occured an event which will serve to illustrate somewhat the existing state of feeling among the officials of the Overland Stage Company and the character of the men in charge of these large wagon trains.

Connected with the Overland Stage and Freighting Company in whose employ my brother was and with one of whose freighting trains I served as cook, was J. A. Slade, a man who was frequently involved in quarrels which generally resulted fatally for his adversary.

The encounter of which I shall make mention took place at Julesburg, on the Platte River, with the keeper of the station, a man named Jules. Between the inhabitants, the emigrants and the stage people there was almost a constant quarrel over missing stock alleged to have been stolen by the settlers, which often terminated in personal encounters such as beating, shooting, stabbing, etc., and it was from this cause that Slade and Jules became bitter enemies, as well as from the fact that the company determined to give the agency of this particular division to Slade instead of Jules.

The latter was himself a lawless and tyrannical man, taking such liberties with the stock of the trains which chanced to camp there and carrying matters with so high a hand that it became absolutely necessary for the company to make the change above noted.

But he was not a man to submit to the authority of a new-comer, or, indeed, of any man that he could intimidate. Slade employed a man whom Jules had discharged and at once open warfare was declared between the two.

We arrived there one evening and a few moments later the coach pulled up at the door with Slade as a passenger. Hardly had he alighted ere he and Jules were engaged in a wordy wrangle. But this was soon brought to an abrupt end by the latter, who raised his gun and fired at Slade, who was unarmed at the time, wounding him severely. The wounded man soon recovered and a short time afterward succeded in securing an advantage over his enemy and proceeded to wreak out his revenge.

Tying Jules securely he took position near him, and in plain view of the tortured man, and deliberately shot him to death by degrees. He then cut the man's ears from his head and in many other ways mutilated his body.

Some years following this the thievings and crimes of a well organized band of desperadoes in Montana necessitated the forming by the citizens of an organization known as the Vigilantes—mention of which will be found in a subsequent chapter.

Slade had also drifted to Montana, but in place of being of the Vigilantes was looked upon as being in league with the desperadoes. Finally he was arrested and hung at Virginia City, the Vigilantes being his executors. After his death and while he still hung by the rope about his neck, search was made of his clothing and among other articles was found the ears which had been cut from his enemy's head several years before, which he had dried and preserved as keepsakes and pocket charms.

CAMP LIFE ON THE PLAINS.

The hardships of camp life are only understood by those who have experienced them in person. Should the weather be calm and pleasant, water and wood at hand in liberal quantities and provisions plentiful, all goes well, but many times this is not the case.

One of the most dreaded events in connection with a trip across the plains is a sand storm. These at times prevail for days at a time and beggar description. Clouds of dust, sand and gravel fill the air, cutting a person's face, filling his mouth, nose, ears and eyes, penetrating to every nook and corner of the "grub box" and rendering every article of food cooked unfit to eat.

Many a time have I endeavored to cook griddle cakes over the camp fire when the blowing sand would be so thickly sprinkled throughout the dough of the cakes as to render them unfit for food. Standing on the windward side of a covered wagon, many and many a time have I longed and almost prayed for the earth to open and receive me in order that I might escape the howling wind and blinding sand.

But 'tis useless to hope to escape, for go where you will the flying dirt will follow and annoy you. Equal with that of the human beings is the suffering of the stock. Unable to face the storm of blinding sand, they will turn their heads from its blinding, cutting blasts and stand bellowing and bawling for hours and even days at a time. To travel under these circumstances is impossible and as one of these terrible storms arise the train is halted and preparations made to await its passage. An effort is made to camp near water, but many times this is impossible to accomplish and in such instances the suffering of man and beast is greatly increased.

Following one of these sandy blizzards I have seen the sand, as snow, drifted along the trail and in the low spots to a depth of two or three feet and in some cases much deeper,

In the late fall the cold winds, drenching rains and blinding sleet and snow storms are encountered. Many and many a morning have I awakened to find the blankets which covered me weighted down with a layer of snow from two to four inches in thickness, and the air filled with a blinding mass of drifting, cutting sleet.

To arise, dress and prepare a meal under these circumstances is a severe test of a person's temper and they who pass through these ordeals with unruffled mind are fit subjects for angels wings and harps of gold.

A "BEE."

The wagon master of a freighting train is considered the ruler of the company. He it is who directs the movements of the train, assigns to each person their particular duty, and lays down the rules and regulations to govern the members of the train.

While gambling and drinking is seldom approved of by the train-master, still in many instances it is tolerated by that official—for to strictly prohibit the indulgence in these vices would be to inaugurate a state of affairs which would render most difficult the procuring and keeping of teamsters and other laborers, as all at that time considered these as privileged practices.

Becoming excited and angered over the loss of money, frantic with disappointment upon seeing their last cent vanish from view, or, becoming engaged in a quarrel over some disputed point, these men would oft times engage in the most terrific hand to hand encounters, but were usually separated by their companions before they had done each other great bodily harm.

The initial tragedy of the train of which I was a member was brought about, however, in this manner on the second evening out from Omaha, on our second return trip. As usual, gathered about the camp fire, seated upon blankets, in companies of four or five, with a small board laid on the ground in their midst upon which to lay the cards as they were played, were the men busily engaged in gambling.

Suddenly among the members of one of these little groups a quarrel arose and springing to their feet they engaged in a fierce hand to hand encounter. Amid the curses and confusion there rang out the sharp report of a single shot, and, throwing his hands high in the air, one of the men fell, face downward upon the ground. The man who had fired the shot stepped backward a pace or two, and there, with flashing eye and face distorted with anger, calmly gazed upon his fallen and dying foe.

The dying man was lifted and laid upon a blanket, his brow dampened and his lips moistened with brandy, while the man who had committed the terrible deed was taken in charge by the men and closely guarded. The wounded man rallied slightly, whispered the names and places of residence of his parents and sweetheart and fell back dead.

Gathering about the body of the dead man the members of the company—after selecting a jury to pass upon the evidence and render a verdict as to the guilt of the murderer—listened to the story of the accused man.

He admitted his guilt but offered as an excuse for his act the statement that he was intoxicated and so influenced by passion as to be unconscious of his acts. Without a word or question the men sat silently by and listened.

As the evidence was concluded the jury, in obedience to a sign from the wagon-master, withdrew to the outer circle of the camp and within the period of a very few moments returned. Again seating themselves they awaited the signal for the presentation of their verdict.

This being given, the foreman of the jury—an old, white-headed man—arose and in a low voice said: "Boss, that 'er man is guilty. Bill warn't a fightin' cuss ef he war treated squar, and nobody had ter burn powder ter keep his claws offen ther carcass ez long as they warn't onery an mean an give him a far, squar deal. This er feller whats let daylight thro' th' boy oughter stretch."

The verdict was received with nods of assent by the other men and at once the work of preparation for the execution of the sentence pronounced by the jury was under way.

Two wagons were drawn to a spot just without the circle about the camp and placed with their forward ends quite close together, the tongues of the same being raised and joined at the top. The condemned man was bound hand and foot, a long rope thrown over the top of the raised wagon tongues and at the signal from the wagon-master the struggling man was drawn from the ground to a height of some two or three feet and there left hanging until dead.

The following morning, before the start for the day's journey, the bodies of both men were prepared for burial and then placed in a rude grave, side by side—the murdered man and his slayer—and at the head of the mound was placed two rough boards bearing respectively the following epitaph: "Shot. He was innocent." "Hung. He was guilty,"

A "PILGRIM."

On our return trips from the Missouri River, we invariably had with us, as passengers, people who were on their way to Denver or some other Rocky Mountain point.

These people, as a rule, were from the eastern States, and, consequently, unfamiliar with the ways of the west, or the appearance and habits of the Indians and wild animals.

These "pilgrims" as they were called by all western people, in case they gave the slightest evidence of fear of the Indians, were made the subjects of many a practical joke and never failed of furnishing the men with a constant source of amusement.

Let a "pilgrim" venture a remark relative to the savages or wild beasts of the plains and, in the twinkling of an eye, the "wink would be passed" and one after another the men would spin a yarn of adventure which would cause each and every particular hair on the "tenderfoot's" head to assume an erect position. It was fun for the boys but rough on the pilgrim, but all looked upon this amusement as a well defined privilege.

About as amusing an episode as I ever witnessed was the antics of a pilgrim Irishman, and about as hearty a laugh as I ever enjoyed was at the expense of a self-announced clergyman, both of whom were on their first trip west and principals in the event which furnished the "old-timers' of the train with laughing material for many a day.

It was on a very windy Sunday, when, as usual, the train was resting from travel and the men were either lounging about their wagons or engaged in some occupation in the line of mending and repairing broken harness or torn garments.

In company with three or four of the mischief-loving and practical jokers of the company, the Irishman had wandered some half mile or so from camp and was being led farther and farther away by those in whose company he was—for it was their intent to treat the fellow to a good fright—when looking up he discovered coming towards him with mighty bounds and great rapidity, a large, dark colored object such as he had never before laid eyes upon.

His cry of astonishment had scarcely escaped his lips ere one of the party, perceiving at a glance that Pat was badly frightened, cried out at the top of his voice that the

Indians were coming. If ever an Irishman ran with the speed of a race horse that poor frightened son of Erin was the one. Followed closely by his companions, all of whom were screaming at the top of their voice, he legged it for camp, the direction he was pursuing taking him with the wind.

So rapid was his flight that it was not until he had nearly reached camp that the large tumble-weed—a species of large, branching weed, which when ripened, breaks from its roots and is rolled about the broad prairie by the winds—finally overtook him. Glancing over his shoulder as the huge weed was about to strike him, he fell headlong upon his face and with hands clasped over his head cried aloud with fear and as his legs became entangled in the branches of the prairie wanderer, his prayers for mercy, his pleadings for forgiveness for sins committed and his shouts for help were indeed mirth-provoking.

The weed was soon loosened and carried on and when the frightened man at last dare raise his head and look about him he was alone on the prairie. Springing to his feet he rushed to camp where he was met with a roar of laughter. This aroused his ire, and advancing upon the men he vowed he would have revenge or death, emphasizing the assertion with oaths and curses.

The clergyman chanced to be passing from one part of camp to another just as this scene was being enacted, and attracted by the loud talk of the enraged man, neared the circle. After listening a moment to what was going on he stepped to the Irishman's side and implored him to cease the use of such profane language.

But Pat was in no condition to be argued with, and with a curse dealt the reverend gentleman a ringing slap across the face with his open hand. This was too much for the expounder of the gospel and he made for the Irishman, who, in stepping backward to avoid the former's rush, stumbled and fell into the "grub-box" which I had but just opened, as the quarrel commenced, for the purpose of securing provision with which to cook supper.

Over the Irishman and "grub-box" went the preacher and in less time than I can tell it the men were rolling about in the midst of butter, pepper, salt, preserves, cold coffee, lard, and a "hundred and one" other things which had been contained in my "pantry."

As suddenly as had been the attack, the clergyman—who, by the way was uppermost in the scramble—loosened his hold upon his antagonist and arose to his feet, saying as he did so, in a calm and solemn tone: "Gentlemen, I have allowed my temper to escape from my control. I am truly sorry that I have thus disgraced myself and forfeited your respect and to prove to you that I am truly penitent, I not only ask forgiveness upon your part, but I also bend my knee in prayer to the Almighty Ruler and beseech his forgiveness of my sin."

As he, with upturned face and clasped hands, sank upon his knees it happened that he chose a spot thickly covered with prickly pears. The pain from a wound inflicted by these plants is most terrible, and as they entered his flesh he sprang to his feet with a scream, and at the same time the Irishman burst forth in a hearty roar of laughter at the misfortune of his late antagonist.

It is hardly necessary to relate the sequel. That son of the Emerald Isle could not have been more roughly handled had that tumble weed been an Indian warrior and he been overtaken and scalped, for when Mr. Preacher had finished with him—the men refused to part them—he was more dead than alive.

AN INDIAN ATTACK.

Several times while we were on our freighting trips we had serious trouble with the Indians, but always managed to best them in the encounters.

Our hardest fight was on the Little Blue River about 25 miles below Fort Carney, where we had one night camped at a station kept by a man named Comstock

Before harnessing the teams and making the start the following morning a scout was sent out to ascertain as to whether or not Indians were in the vicinity.

He had left the camp behind but a short distance, and was still within our view, when he discovered that foes were in the vicinity and started to return. At once the Indians, who had been in hiding hear him, opened fire and at the same time started in his pursuit, and endeavored to gain a position between him and camp. The race was an exciting one and the scout had the best of it until within three or four hundred yards of the station, when an arrow shattered his arm and his reins dropped from his hand, thus leaving his horse to run at will.

Seeing the unfortunate man thus at the mercy of his foes, without an instant's reflection I leaped to the saddle of a horse which stood tied to the corral, and before any of the men, who were busy with their arms, could preceed me I was on my way to the rescue. Seeing me thus rushing into peril they called to me to return, but I knew that to hesitate now would be to allow the scout to be captured, and urging the horse to his utmost speed I circled the horse and rider and headed the frightened animal toward the corral.

Arrows were flying thick and fast, but I was at that time an expert equestrienne, and, bending my body close to the neck and shoulder of my mount, I escaped all harm and reached the corral in safety.

The men were now busy with the Indians, for the attack had by this time commenced in earnest, and while at first we had seen but a few of the savages, there now appeared on every side of us countless numbers.

With hideous yells and shouts of demons they would, with a confusing rush and in large numbers attack the station house and corral from all sides and directions, at times almost overpowering the brave men who were garrisoned within, but with unflinching bravery the members of the train repulsed their attacks and as the forenoon wore away the attacks became less frequent, and, finally, during the afternoon ceased entirely.

But, knowing full well their methods of warfare, we offered them no opportunity for unexpected onslaught and remained within our little fort. The next morning witnessed a second battle, but, as before, the blood-thirsty savages were repulsed, many of their number being killed and wounded. For four days and nights were we thus surrounded before the Indians finally abandoned hope of effecting our capture.

At the expiration of that time there arrived a small detachment of soldiers who were out from Fort Carney as a scouting party, and from them we learned the particulars of the almost complete annihilation of an immigrant train, at a point some twenty or thirty miles above the fort, on the same day we were first attacked. The train was plundered and burned, and of its members, at the time a company of soldiers visited the scene, between forty and fifty scalped and mutilated bodies were found.

As a member of that train, on her way from the east to join her husband at Denver, was a lady by the name of Mrs. Tom Smith. The gentleman had been notified by letter that his wife would be a passenger on that train, and, anxious to again meet his loved companion and hold in his arms the little child whose coming was an event which had transpired during the time which had elapsed since last he saw his wife, he started from Denver with a team and buggy to meet the train and return with his little family.

He had scarcely reached the side of the wagon in which his wife and child were riding—one of the foremost in the train—when at the rear end of the long string of wagons the war whoop was heard and the confusion and sound of fire-arms told of the attack of the caravan by Indians.

Quickly lifting his wife and child from the wagon in which they were riding, he seated them in his buggy and springing to their side lashed his horses to their utmost speed. Soon a small band of Indians were in hot pursuit, but, as the start gained by the team was considerable, and, being burdened as they were with but a light load they were able to maintain their lead, the Indians after a few mile's chase abandoned the pursuit and returned to participate in the bloody work at the train.

When a point of safety had been reached, as the fond husband lifted his wife from the buggy and stooped to kiss the sweet lips of his darling child, the face he touched was cold in death, for, unconsciously during the excitement of the occuring events, and while frantic with fear lest her little one should be taken from her by the demons by whom they were pursued, the mother had so tightly clasped her arms about the infant as to crush from its frail and tender little body the spark of life.

All connected with this deplorable affair were numbered among my intimate friends, and, while I am not able to state that I was an eye-witness to the event, still as to the fact of its occurence I can fully vouch.

CHAPTER XIII

MY FIRST VISIT TO MONTANA—INCIDENTS OF THE TRIP—SCOUTING—INDIANS CROSSING THE BIG HORN RIVER—MY LIFE SAVED BY AN INDIAN—LOST IN THE BAD LANDS—CLARKE'S FORK.

My last trip across the plains marks the date of my settlement in Montana, since which time I have been a resident of that Territory and State.

Leaving Omaha with a large train of wagons, we adopted the route commonly called the "Bozeman Cut-off." Passing Fort Laramie we travelled on, without serious mishap, until Fort Reno, situated on the Powder River, was reached. Several skirmishes were had with the Indians, but not until this place was reach was any of the members of the party killed or wounded.

The evening before going into camp at Fort Reno, our herder, who was some little distance in the rear of the train looking after the stock, was surrounded by the savages and killed, and at the same time the stock was stampeded and stolen.

Upon arriving at the Fort the next morning, a detachment of troops were sent out in company with a party of the male members of our train, and late the same day returned with the greater part of the stolen stock, which they had retaken from the Indians, after a sharp skirmish.

The commanding officer at the Fort advised our wagon-master, upon our arrival there, to halt the train for a few days and await the coming of an additional party of travelers, for, in his opinion, our train was lacking in numbers to venture forth in the face of almost certain attacks from the ever present red men. This advice was accepted and for nearly a week we rested and waited.

At this place was then stationed a company of probably one hundred or one hundred and fifty soldiers—regular troops. The fort, as I now remember it, was built in the shape of a triangle, the base of the triangle being the side toward which the buildings all faced. The stockade on this side was of large cottonwood logs—with which variety of timber the banks of the Powder River is thickly covered—central in which were large gates to admit of entrance to the fort, and along the entire length being numerous port holes through which to fire upon an attacking force. The two other sides of the enclosure were built with large logs piled one upon another, against which, on the outside, was thrown up a bank of dirt. The space within the enclosure was several acres in extent and scattered here and there were the dwellings, barracks and stables.

The soil was of a reddish color—as was the water in the Powder River—and of a clayey nature.

This place, as I have before said, was our home for a period of nearly a week, and during that time our treatment by the commanding officer and the soldiers in general was of the most hospitable kind. Our stock of provisions was here replenished, our broken straps and torn garments mended and everything put in readiness for the future journey.

While engaged one day, shortly after our arrival, with the mending of a pair of buckskin gloves which I had originally made for my brother, but which were now quite badly worn, the commander of the fort, a very neat appearing and finely dressed gentleman, approached me and inquired as to where gloves of that kind might be obtained. I informed him that I had made the same and at once he requested that I perform a like service for him, agreeing to liberally pay me for the work. I consented to do so and, as I had in my possession a sufficient quantity of buckskin with which to make the gloves, at once commenced work on them and in the course of two or three days had them completed.

They were delivered to the gentleman by my brother and in exchange for the same we received several cases of canned fruits—a liberal compensation indeed. This stock of supplies afterwards proved of untold value to us, as will be related later on.

At the end of about a week's time our original number had been increased greatly by the arrival of other trains, and when we finally were ready for the start we went forth from the stockade at the fort two hundred and fifty strong.

Our last camping place on the Powder River was at a place known as "Crazy Woman's Fork" and upon arriving here we found the dead bodies of a man and woman and a considerable number of dead and wounded animals. Near the man was the bleached bones of a buffalo head and upon this, in pencil, was written the words, "Look out for the Indians."

Even in the throes of death had this noble-hearted, although roughly dressed and uncouth appearing man, thought of the safety of his fellow-men and with this thought uppermost in his heart crept to the rude tablet and there written words which, when read by others, resounded as a glowing tribute to his memory, inasmuch as they stood forth as a lasting evidence of his manliness and kindly instinct.

Before leaving the place the following morning a grave was made and the two bodies accorded decent burial.

At this point the question arose among the members of the train as to which one of two roads was the proper one to pursue, and finally resulted in the train dividing, one portion following one trail and the other portion a different one.

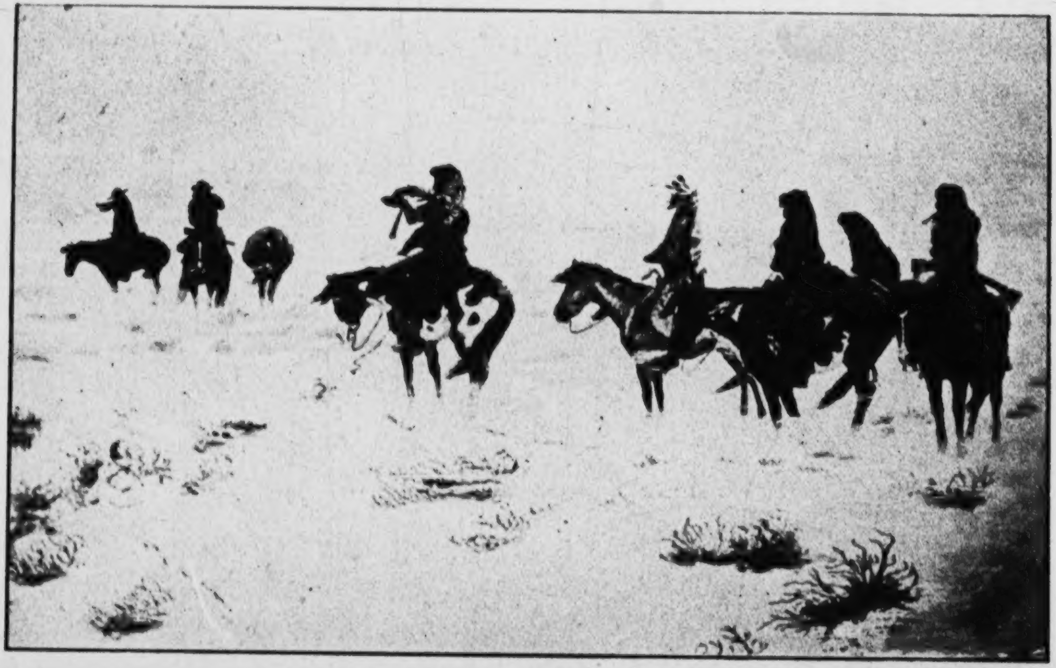
With the dividing of the train the portion with which I continued was left without a scout familiar with the habits and methods of the Indians. As it was known that I had passed the greater part of my life upon the plains and knew well the ways of the savages, I was asked by the wagon-master to lead the scouts, and from this tim forward to the end of the journey I performed that service, riding in advance of the train, and from the high points and knolls constantly keeping a sharp lookout for signs which told of the presence of the foes, and, although on one or two occasions we had short skirmishes with the savages, still our train escaped a general attack.

The next place for us to reach where whites were found was Fort Smith, on the Big Horn River, and a scene which I here witnessed I will particularly mention. As we neared the fort from the opposite side of the river to that upon which the building and stockades were located, we could, for some time before arriving at the river's bank, perceive that something of an unusual kind was taking place, for upon the banks of the stream were to be seen large numbers of people moving hither and thither from place to place, and all apparently employed in the work of some general undertaking.

As we approached nearer we were able to discern that the people we had seen and been watching were Indians and soon discovered that the work in which they were so busily engaged was that of crossing the river.

The Big Horn at this place was a wide, swift-running and dangerous stream and novel indeed was the manner in which these people transported their belongings from shore to shore.

The band which we found thus engaged numbered nearly ,000 and were upon their return from a council with e commander of the Fort on the opposite side, and were



Lost in a Snow Storm—"We are Friends."

at that time very friendly—and by the way, let me here state that one of the peculiarities of the Indians at the time of which I write was that at times no more obliging, accommodating and kind-hearted friends were to be found than they, but notwithstanding their acts of to-day no opinion could be formed of their attitude toward the whites on the morrow. Friendly one day, hostile the next; murdering and mutilating as the sun set and extending a friendly hand to the pale faces of another train as the sun rose—our only guide by which to judge of the treatment we might expect from them was the presence or absence of the gaudy war-paint. Were this decoration lacking we might with a fair degree of safety treat them as friends, but were it present they were to be feared.

Nearing the bank of the stream we halted the train and approached the scene. But few of the Indians had as yet reached the shore on which we stood, but many were already on their way across the stream, and those who had arrived were busily preparing to proceed onward.

The manner of crossing the stream, was, as I have heretofore said, a most novel one, and with interest all members of the train viewed its accomplishment.

Taking a large buffalo robe or skin, the slave of th family—the squaw—would, with a sharp knife, cut small holes the entire distance around its outer edge. Through these holes was then laced a small rawhide thong in such a manner as to permit of the gathering the edges of the robe or skin tightly together, thus forming a large pouch or sack. Into this rude pouch would then be placed all the belongings of the family, such as cooking utensils, weapons, trinkets, medicines, etc., after which the rawhide is drawn tightly and the mouth of the sack closed.

This is done while the robe yet lays upon the shore near the water's edge, but not until those engaged in the work have removed nearly every vestige of clothing and are in condition to wade about in the water as they work. Mounting his pony the head of the family takes in one hand the reins and with the other grasps a long rawhide rope which has been attached to the buffalo-skin sack.

As he advances into the water the squaw pushes the bundle from shore until a point is reached where the water is of sufficient depth to allow of its floating, when the young of the family are lifted to the top where they cling to the rawhide thong, edges of the robe or portruding handles of articles within.

Proceeding on until the water becomes too deep for wading, the Indian throws one arm about the neck of his horse, places the end of the rawhide which is attached to the bundle between his teeth and with his disengaged hand aids himself to swim by the side of his pony, the sack containing the possessions of the family floating a short distance below him and being balanced and kept right side up by the squaw, who swims by the side of the same, employing one hand in the work of balancing the bundle and the other in swimming.

The little ones perched upon the top watch closely every move or lurch of their "canoe" and are very quick to throw their weight from side to side as occasion demands in order to prevent the same from tipping, and should the same by accident capsize soon again resume their former position, for all are expert swimmers and have no distaste whatever for an occasional "ducking."

Thus, with an occasional mishap, did this band, one after another, effect their crossing, while we ourselves were engaged in a like task, but in a different method. Here we found a small ferry boat was in operation and upon this one wagon at a time, and with the team swimming by the side of the boat, was the transportation of the train from shore to shore accomplished. Two days time was employed in the work and a fee of five dollars per wagon was paid for the use of the boat.

Three or four mules were drowned—and, by the way the handling of a mule while in the water is a most difficult task, for let but a small amount of water find its way into their huge ears and they will at once cease all efforts to swim and drown almost immediately—but further than this all safely landed on the opposite shore.

Stopping but a few hours at Fort Smith we again journeyed on. As we made our way across the vast expanse of far-stretching prairie large herds of buffalo were to be seen on every hand, and with the coming of evening the animals would approach our camp. At times so thick would they become about us that the teamsters were obliged to frighten them away by shooting into their midst, for, while they did no particular harm, still while they were present in such large numbers our stock were prevented from finding good grazing.

Indians were, as usual, quite numerous, but at the same time very friendly, in fact a week or two after we had passed Fort Smith one of the red men saved my life.

The event came about in this way. On a Sunday, while we were, as usual, in camp, there approached us a large herd of buffalo which were being pursued by a band of Indian hunters. As they passed close to camp a large buffalo bull was wounded by the spears of his pursuers and fell near by a spot where stood a small cottonwood tree. I had been watching the chase and as the wounded animal fell and was surrounded by the Indians, who circled about at a short distance from him, I approached the scene for the purpose of obtaining a closer and better view of the maneuvers of the hunters.

I had reached a point distant possibly a hundred yards or so from the wounded bull when the animal suddenly sprang to his feet, broke through the circle of horsemen, and, as chance would have it, made straight for me. I must admit that as I saw that enraged and frantic animal advancing with lowered head and flashing eyes and heard his deep and thundering bellowings of rage, I was scarcely able to move hand or foot, but my wits were soon about me and in an instant I was fleeing from the brute with all possible speed.

Running for the small tree which stood near by I succeeded in reaching it a few feet in advance of my pursuer, and as I neared it threw out one arm and catching about the trunk of the tree, stopped myself, while the beast went thundering by, unable to turn and stop as quickly as I had done.

By this time one of the Indians was close by my side, and, grasping my hand drew me to the pony's back. But we were none too quick, as the buffalo had by this time turned and was almost upon us. With yells and kicks the Indian urged the pony at a terrific pace direct for the camp while closely following us was the wounded bull.

On we went, into camp, through and beyond, circling to the right and again approached the train from which the men were by this time hurrying, with rifles in hand, to our rescue. As we passed within close range a dozen rifles were raised, shot after shot rang out, and the wounded bull fell dead almost in his tracks.

The Indians soon gathered about the fallen animal and in a very short time entered camp in a body and presented me with the tongue—the choicest morsel about the animal and considered by the Indians a gift which outweighs as a token of friendship anything else that may be given. They gathered about me closely and scrutinized my features, my hands, feet and clothing and with difficulty could I keep them from laying their hands upon me and pinching my flesh and pulling me about, for I was to them a great curiosity, inasmuch as I was the first white woman they had ever seen.

They rode away in the course of an hour or so, but early the following morning, before we had started for our day's travel returned in company with a large party—in fact their entire party—and again was I surrounded and scrutinized, and at last compelled to seek refuge in one of the wagons to escape their pulling and hauling.

A day or two more of travel and, ere we were scarcely aware of the fact, we were wandering, lost and bewildered in the midst of the "bad lands."

Many and many a time have I thought of those terrible days, when, weary, discouraged, suffering for want of water, we wandered from place to place, advancing only to find that instead of improving our condition we had struggled forward into a place much worse than we had but just left, but never have I yet been able to find words which would convey in the most limited degree, a faint idea of the hardships, discomforts and discouragements we experienced.

The formation of the country was, while not mountainous, still rough and hilly, and partook in a marked degree of the nature of a large marsh. About on every hand were scattered large rock and bowlders, and here and there were large bare spots, resembling places where water had once stood, but were now dry. The soil was a reddish-brown clay, resembling very much ground and finely broken rock, while the spots of which I speak—alkali mud springs—were on the surface white, and presented the appearance of large, bare rocks. The vegetation was limited and consisted almost entirely of small brush, called "grease-wood," and a variety of weed known as "soap-weed." Even the most solid of ground would shake and tremble beneath the weight of the wagons and teams as if beneath were only water and mud.

During the first day or two of our wanderings after entering these "bad lands," we would occasionally find a

A View in the "Bad Lands."

small quantity of water in a "buffalo wallow." These were places where a small and partially dried up lake existed and the dirt had been pawed from a spot and stamped by the buffalo until a large circular depression or hole was formed, and where, amid their own manure and urine and the mud and water of the pond or minature lake the animals would stand hour after hour through the day fighting flies.

The water in these places would be filthy and stale and covered with a greenish slime, but still as we became almost dead from thirst, we finally were compelled to dip the liquid from these "wallows," and, after straining it as best we could, boil the same and make coffee which we drank rather than die.

Approaching one of these filthy holes the teams and stock would become almost unmanageable and only by the greatest effort on the part of all members of the train could they be restrained from rushing into the very midst of the "wallow."

At last these places disappeared entirely and thus were we deprived of even this means of quenching thirst. Then were we compelled to open the cans of fruit which I had received from the commanding officer at Fort Reno and moisten our lips and throats with the juice and liquid therein contained. For three days this was our only drink and the last day of this terrible suffering we were without liquid of any kind, for our supply of canned fruit had been consumed.

As we proceeded into the very heart of this terrible country it was with extreme difficulty that even the slightest progress could be made. The men and teams both became greatly weakened by reason of lack of food and drink, for there was no grazing for the teams, and owing to lack of water with which to cook, our provisions were soon exhausted, and as the teams and wagons would sink into the alkali mud it would be with the utmost difficulty that they were extricated.

Several teams were thus lost as at times places would be encountered where an animal would suddenly sink from sight, and before help could be rendered would entirely disappear beneath the apparently half-dry mud.

In advance of the train were constantly several men walking with sticks in hand prospecting a road and testing with the long poles which they carried the character of every foot of ground over which the teams were to pass, but still, notwithstanding this precaution, scarcely a half hour passed but that some team would be mired or some wagon securely stuck in the treacherous soil, for even were the trail apparently dry and solid, with the passing of the first few wagons it would begin to become dangerous and by the time the rear of the train had reached the spot would be almost impassable.

At night, after the camp had been made, countless hordes of large, gaunt, ferocious wolves would hover about, and were only restrained from attacking the stock of the train by guards or pickets posted about the outer circle of the camp. Throughout the livelong night their howling and snarling would keep us awake, while the stock, frantic with fear, were almost constantly engaged in an effort to break from control.

Thus did we struggle on, longing, hoping and praying for sight of water, when on the fourth day we eventually emerged from this vast, desolate and treacherous dry swamp and mounted the foothills of a mountain range.

Then came the work of cutting a road through the timber which covered the side of the mountain at the base of which we were. With bodies weakened from the effects of the long fasting and thirsting the men bravely undertook the task and the teams were with difficulty urged forward.

As the forward wagon reached the summit of the mount from the occupants there arose a long, joyous halloo, and as the sound was carried on and on down the long line it was interpreted aright and all knew that water was near at hand.

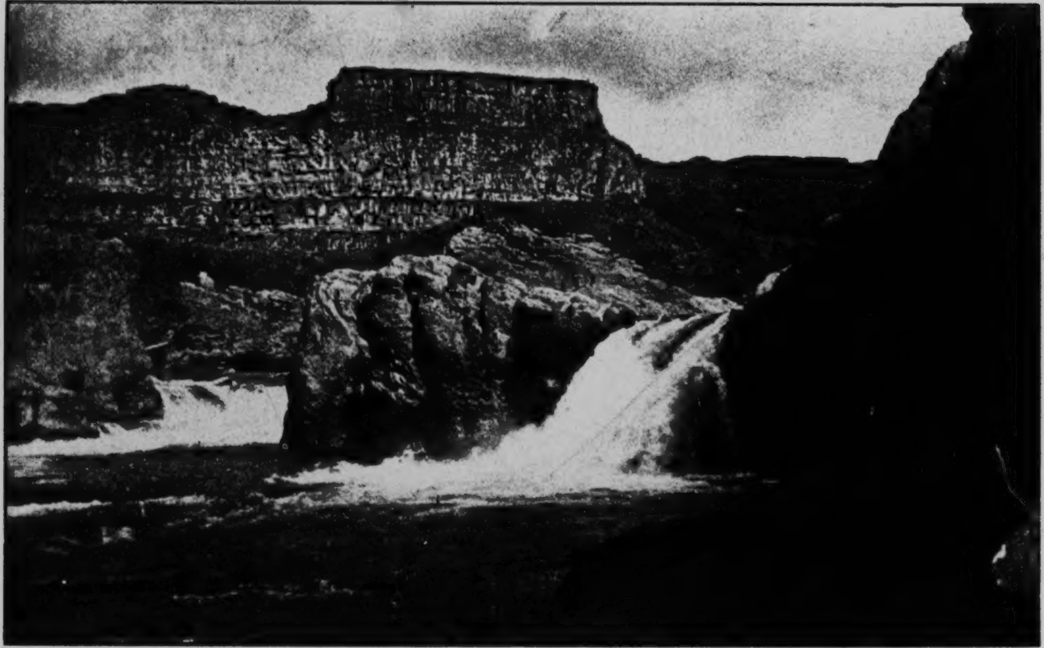
Hastily alighting from the wagon the teamster who had first made the glad discovery, loosened his team from their fastenings and down the opposite mountain side they raced, he himself following. As the other teams arrived his example was practiced by all and soon all were drinking from the waters of Clarke's Fork, for it was at this stream we had arrived.

A person who has never experienced the terrible torture of intense thirst has not the slightest conception of the agony and suffering occasioned thereby. After the second day our lips became parched and swollen and our very tongues began to swell and refuse to act. The keen appetite experienced during the first two days entirely disappeared and we suffered but little from lack of food. But it seemed that our very bodies would burst into flame in their intense craving for water. Pains, sharp, penetrating and torturesome would dart from limb to limb, our eyes grew dim and lustreless, our heads throbbed and ached with a pain almost unbearable and by the time we had made our way over the mountain's top and reached the water at the opposite base, many of our company were scarcely able to walk, while nearly every beast in the train was in an equally deplorable condition.

As we plunged into that cool mountain stream and felt the water upon our bodies, hands and faces, and partook of long, cool, refreshing draughts, no words could fully portray our feelings of thankfulness and joy. All at first drank but sparingly and with united efforts at once set about the work of driving and leading the stock from the stream. This was finally accomplished, not, however, without much difficulty, after which the work of lowering the wagons from the mountain side was undertaken.

This was a laborious task, for the descent was very steep. First came the "grub wagon" and this having reached the bottom safely a fire was kindled and I hurriedly prepared the men a meal. As with the water, no one indulged to satisfaction their craving in partaking of the food at first, and in the course of a couple of hours we all again ate sparingly.

It was now quite late in the afternoon, and the men having left after partaking of the second lunch for the top of the mountain to bring down the remaining wagons, I



A Mountain Stream.

was alone at camp.

Busily at work cleaning and putting away the cooking utensils, I did not hear or notice the approach of a visitor until, hearing the breaking of a bough behind me, I turned quickly and stood face to face with a large grizzly bear who was leisurely making his way in my direction, but some twenty or thirty feet from where I stood.

With alacrity I mounted the front wheel of the grub wagon and tumbled rather than jumped into the box of the same and from there watched proceedings. Walking along slowly, as if nothing of an unusual kind were transpiring, Bruin approached the "grub box," helped himself to all he found therein contained which suited his fancy, and without so much as a look in my direction, turned and walked on up a small game trail which led along the river's bank.

Until he had arrived at a safe distance I neither moved nor spoke, but then unconsciously I gave utterance to the thought uppermost in my mind. "One would think," said I "that you owned this layout by the way you act, but that's all right, help yourself to all the grub you want for we can get more where that come from, but for heaven's sake don't drink the river dry," and I truly believe I never gave more truthful expression to my feelings in my life than I did then.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON TO THE BEAUTIFUL YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY—A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL YELLOWSTONE PARK—THE PAINT POTS—OLD FAITHFUL—THE CASTLE—LIBERTY CAP—THE CANYON OF THE YELLOWSTONE.

Here we rested for three days, that length of time being required for the work of getting the wagons to the bottom of the mountain, repairing, washing, etc.

At the end of that time we started on along the banks of the stream and camped the following night on the banks of the same river, feasting on mountain trout, which were indeed a luxury, following as they did, the fast of the few days previous. The next morning the river was left to our right and a far-stretching prairie, well covered with luxuriant grass and here and there crossed by a clear, cool stream along the banks of which grew as a rule considerable timber, was traversed during the next few days, the next stream of importance which was reached being the

Yellowstone River, a wide, but shallow stream, with a beautiful gravel bottom and clear, cool water in which there swam countless numbers of various varieties of fish.

Here were killed several deer, buffalo and antelope, all of which were abundant. From here we traveled in a northerly direction, passing through a portion of the country now noted as the National Yellowstone Park.

At this time this section had been but little explored and the world knew but little of its beauties and wonders.

The wonders and amazing sights of this beautiful region would furnish me a subject upon which I might write for almost an unlimited time, but even though I attempted to fully describe this magnificent fairy-land of nature I could not do the subject justice.

A visit to this place would fully convince the most skeptical that no country has grander natural scenery than our own.

The traveler in foreign lands is chiefly charmed by the points of historic interest. The poetic soul visits the sunny land of Italy and is inspired by the thought that those hills and valleys once echoed to the voice and tread of classic poets and scholars. The chief attraction of most foreign countries is the evidences of former greatness, the ruins.

But in the far west of grand old America the sight of nature in the wild grandeur of her own beauty, unnarrowed by the hand of man and unmarked by the ruins of ambitious rulers is what thrills the traveler.

Here the soul is filled with wonder and admiration by the sight of nature's temples built by nature's hand.

My wanderings have brought me to a realization of the fact that no one can appreciate the beauty and extent of our vast Republic until they have traveled over her surface from the broad lakes on the north to where the flowers bloom in perpetual spring in the south and from the rock-bound New England coast across the vast territory of plains and valleys and mountains, rich in every variety of wealth, to where the sun enters the golden gate of the Pacific.

Indeed ours is a land of magnificent distances, of boundless resources and amazing beauty, and no place can be found which offers a like illustration of this fact as does the vicinity of which I now speak.

As I have before stated, this wonderland was at the time of my first visit an unexplored region and, therefore, its beauties were unknown to the world, and in its natural state. It has since been improved in many ways, the most noted of the geysers have been named and designated and man's ingenuity and craft has been added to that of nature to make it the Eden of the world.

Many years after my first visit I returned with a pleasure party and passed several weeks in this now noted place, and the brief description I shall append hereto is as I found the Park on my second visit and after the geysers and other celebrated spots and rocks had received their respective and distinguishing names.

The early miners soon called attention to this delightful region of the upper waters of the Yellowstone River.

General attention was soon attracted to this most delightful portion of the world by the boiling springs, geysers, and canyon of the Yellowstone with its lofty falls and charming cascades.

In 1872 Congress set aside this region as a "perpetual reservation for the instruction of mankind." It was styled a National Park in this act of Congress.

This park is situated in the northwest corner of Wyoming and is sixty-two miles long and fifty-four miles wide. It might seem diminutive in size at first thought, being as it is only a small corner of one of the great states, but as compared with the old states, it is nearly equal in size to Rhode Island and Delaware combined. Here again an idea may be formed of the "magnificent distances" of our country.

The National Park contains by far the most noted of the three geyser regions of the world. I wish I could describe the scenes in a manner which would enable all to catch a glimpse by way of the mind's eye, but at best I can make but a feeble attempt.

As I entered the Park by way of Lake Henry, I found the scenery most delightful and fascinating. In full view stands the huge "Sphinx," a tall crag rising above the surrounding peaks. At the top of the "Sphinx" a man's features may be traced, while the features and long beard of a Turk are plainly outlined by looking at it from an adjoining cliff in another direction. Near the base may be traced the form of a child leaning against its massive support.

"Lone Maiden," a commanding column of rock, with her long wavy hair flowing down her back, stands a little further in the Park, near what are called the "Paint Pots". These "Paint Pots" are boiling springs, something in form like a huge wash basin and are filled with thick material resembling paint.

Besides these there are mud springs that differ from the boiling springs only in being filled with a thick mixture that boils like mush. Bubbles arise and burst and spatter mud against the sides, thus building them up constantly into a crater.

The first of the principal geysers is known as "Old Faithful,"which spouts its column of boiling water every sixty-five minutes. The explosion lasts only a few minutes, and there is a deep noise like the sound of heavy artillery; then the spouting waters form a sight ever to be remembered. As the column of water rises and falls toward the earth in rainbows, the steam rises and floats like a cloud.

The water from "Old Faithful" rises from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet. The geyser is called "Old Faithful" on account of the regularity of its action. In about 1870 it is said to have spouted at intervals of about three-quarters of an hour. At first sight the steam seems to take the appearance of a massive female holding an infant in her arms. This appearance is so constant that it never fails to attract the attention of the onlooker.

In oriental climes and earlier ages "Old Faithful" would have been deified and a massive temple would have been erected near, where might be worshipped the goddess

"Castle Geyser," Yellowstone National Park.

of little children.

The "Bee Hive," so called because of the shape of the mound or crater, with great noise throws a column of water that ascends about two hundred and twenty feet, and the water instead of falling back into the basin is dissipated in spray and vapor.

The "Castle" varies in height, but sometimes reaches a height of two hundred and fifty feet. This geyser is named after its appearance, being that of a ruined castle. The sides rise irregularly, one side being broken down, so you can stand by it and look down into the crater.

The "Giant" has a strong and massive appearance It sustains its eruptions from one to three hours, and throws a column of water about five feet in diameter, and reaches at its highest more than two hundred and fifty feet. It has been known to continue its action for three and one-half hours. Just think what an amount of boiling water must be thrown forth by this huge squirt-gun in that length of time.

The "Giantess" is also noted. This geyser lifts the main column to a height of about sixty feet, but shoots a thin spire to more than two hundred and fifty feet. The sound of the eruptions is sometimes appalling.

In the case of the "Castle" its greatest efforts make a deafening noise and shake the ground like an earthquake. Other geysers may be counted by the hundred, but a good idea of them may be formed from what I have written.

There are in the National Park of the Yellowstone, distinct from the geysers, more than ten thousand boiling springs.

Why, let me tell you how I washed my clothes one day, just for the fun of the thing, when I was there on my first trip. I tied them in a strong bag and lowered them by a rope into one of these boiling springs. They came out as clean and fresh as a schoolmarm's Sunday-go-to-meeting gown.

Food may also be cooked in these kettles of nature, but care must be taken in selecting the spring, as some of them have the smell of sulphuretted hydrogen, or to speak in plain language, tired, weary and ancient eggs.

This valley of the Yellowstone where these geysers and boiling springs are situated is about six thousand feet above the level of the sea. Still higher, and toward the southern part of the Park, nestled among the mountains, nearly seven thousand feet above sea level, spreads out Yellowstone Lake, a delightful body of water three hundred feet deep and large enough to float the regular navy of the world.

The canyon of the Yellowstone is one of exceeding beauty. The mountains rise from one to two thousand feet on either side, and in this deep cut, the water plunges onward through twenty miles of unparalleled scenery; now it plunges down the "Great Falls" more than twice the height of Niagara Falls; now it whirls past overhanging rocks; now it spreads out into the world renowned "Crystal Cascades," then gathers itself into a deep and narrow stream, as if to gain strength for its next headlong leap down some fearful precipice.

A Mountain Canyon.

Always it is delightful, and always the beholder is entranced by its mingled power and splendor.

The sides of the canyon are not among the least of its attractions. Their splendor cannot be described. They must be seen to be appreciated. I have tried to think of appropriate words to use in speaking of this place and the nearest I can come to giving even a faint idea of it is to say that it is as if Aurora, the goddess of morning, had gathered up the hues of the rainbow and mingled them with all the golden sunset and autumnal hues since the creation, and scattered them in broken fragments of beauty to charm the soul of man.

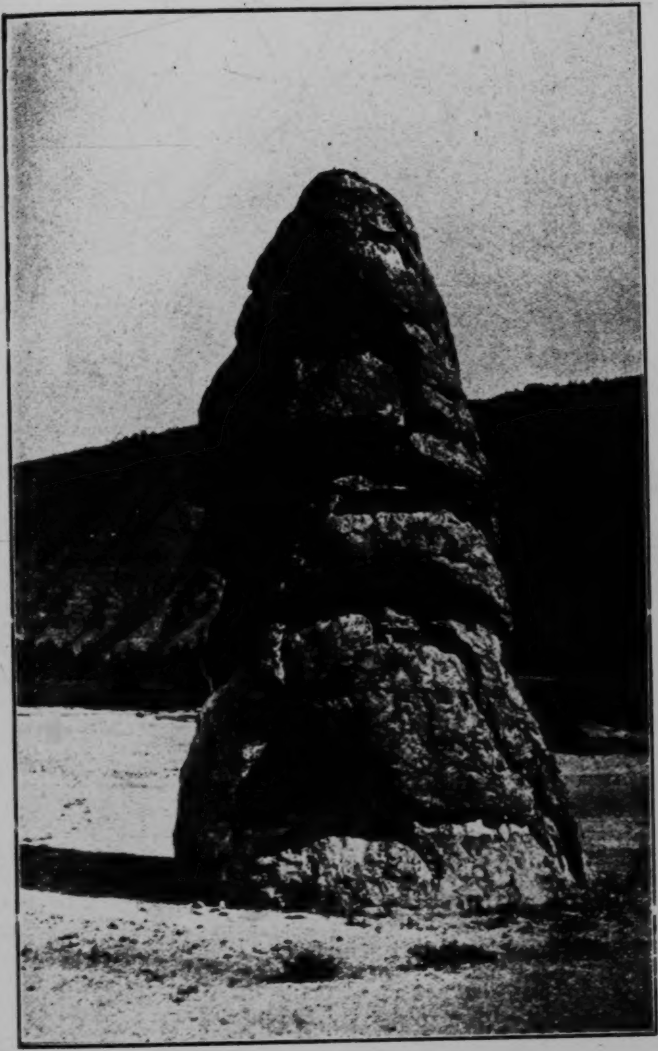
It may be but a reflection caught from the waving banners of angels, but such divine colors play along the rugged sides of this canyon as do give us glimpses of the eternal.

This is no fairy tale, for the rocks all red and yellow and brown with all their intermediate shades, and all blended with the emerald green of the trees, give the region the appearance of a very fairy-land indeed.

In this I have not yet mentioned "Tower Falls," that rise more than one hundred and fifty feet, nor "Giant's Gate," the massive rocky opening along the canyon, which seems as if some huge being in primeval days had swung back the side of the mountain for a passway.

Last, but not least, stands the "Liberty Cap," a stately rock, towering above the plain, and surmounted by Uncle Sam's trade mark—the American flag. There, night and day, this ensign of our liberty keeps guard over this fairy-land of our nation and the wonder-land of the world.

This section of country having been traversed we next, after winding about the mountains, came to the Gallatin Valley, following the Gallatin River until Bozeman was reached. This town at that time consisted of but two houses—a store and postoffice. After leaving Bozeman and crossing another chain of mountains we arrived at our destination, Virginia City, having been on the trip nearly three months.



"Liberty Cap," Yellowstone National Park.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INNOCENT MAN HUNG—MY CABIN HOME—EXPERIENCES OF THE FIRST WINTER IN VIRGINIA CITY—THE VIGILANTES—WHY ORGANIZED.

Here the freight which had been brought by the train was unloaded and soon the teamsters and men separated and scattered about the town and adjoining country looking for work.

Among the passengers who had made the trip with our train was a young man named Billy Wilson. Soon after our arrival at Virginia City he, like the rest of the men, started in search of work. Hearing of a place a few miles from town where he would be likely to secure a position, he started alone and on foot for the place, but during the afternoon was overtaken by a man who was riding one horse and leading another.

Wilson was invited by the stranger to ride with him and accepted the invitation. That night they camped together and were about to resume their travels the following morning when a party of Vigilantes entered their camp, in search of a span of stolen horses, and those rode by Wilson and his new-found friend were quickly recognized as the pair for which search was being made.

Refusing to listen to or accept excuses or apologies of any kind whatsoever from Wilson or his companion, and assuming that possession was prima facie evidence of the guilt of the possessor, the Vigilantes promptly hung both men, the innocent as well as the guilty—for no doubt existed as to the guilt of the man with whom Wilson was traveling.

The next day the bodies were cut down and brought to town for burial, and it was then we learned of the fate of this innocent boy—the Vigilantes telling of the statement he had made—and at that time also was his innocence established, for all knew of the date of his coming to Virginia City, and all who were members of the train could testify as to his innocence. But it was now too late for such testimony to aid the poor boy and all that remained for his friends to do was to accord his body a decent burial, which was done.

Our arrival in Virginia City with the freighting train was at a date quite late in the fall, and, as soon as the train disbanded, which was within but a few days, brother and I at once set about preparing for the winter.

We both had wages coming for the work we had done, but in less than two weeks after our arrival brother was

Cabin Home in Virginia City.

taken very sick with brain fever and soon our funds were exhausted.

I will tell you of our home. A small, low log cabin built from charred pine logs, the door being simply a large hole in the side of the wall and the lone window being of the same material. The floor was of earth, but this I eventually carpeted with four medium-sized cowhides, which were held in place by wooden pegs driven through the corners of the hide into the earth beneath. A sheet iron stove, a few tin dishes, a small box for a stand and table, with a tallow candle held in a home-made candlestick, and the furniture and contents of the house is almost fully described.

Amid these surroundings, and with brother to care for, as he raved with brain fever, did I enter upon the winter without money.

Brother still owned the mule team with which he had formerly freighted and this I rented to a man, who wished to haul wood, receiving as payment for the use of the team, one-half of the net proceeds. It this way wood was provided.

I then was afforded an opportunity to rent a sewing machine from a tailor who had decided to visit his old home in England, and, securing the same, paid $7 per month for its use. With this I managed to do enough work and earn enough to keep us in food during the early part of the winter.

Besides the sewing for individuals which I did I was given a contract for making flour sacks, for which I received five cents each, and could, by working hard, complete one hundred of the same in a day and evening.

While $5.00 per day would now be considered high wages for a woman to earn, in those days it was barely enough with which to purchase the necessaries of life. During the winter flour was sold for as high as $110.00 per sack of one hundred pounds; potatoes were worth 60 cents per pound, or $36.00 per bushel; eggs $2.00 per dozen; butter $1.50 per pound and all other provisions were valued in proportion.

This state of affairs was owing to the fact that snow fell to an unusual depth, thus preventing the freighting trains from traveling between Virginia City and Salt Lake City from which latter place the greater portion of our merchandise was received.

While my brother's condition gradually improved still his recovery was very slow in coming about. As he grew slightly better and was at last able to dispense with my almost constant attention, I would leave him for a few hours at a time and go from cabin to cabin and cook for the miners and also do what lay within my power to make comfortable the condition of the sick, which I found were quite numerous in the neighborhood.

As the winter lengthened and became more and more severe the struggle for bread became harder and harder and therefore, as may be imagined, my joy and thankfulness knew no bounds when, on Christmas morning as I opened the rude door of my little cabin—which I had myself made since first I occupied the hut—I found sitting in the

Loading a Packing Train.

snow, leaning against the side of the doorway, a sack of flour, to which was attached a small card upon which was written, "Merry Christmas from the Miners, in remembrance of your kind acts and cheerful words."

This proved to be but an initial kindness shown me by these men, and during the remainder of that long, severe season our home was made quite comfortable and our stock of provisions kept fully adequate to our needs by means of the money I was able to earn with my machine and their occasional presents.

Early the following spring our residence was changed from Virginia City to Harris Gulch, a mining camp situated about fifteen miles from the first-named town.

Here brother secured employment in the mines which were that spring discovered, and, the miners building for us a small log cabin with a brush kitchen, I engaged to board the men.

But before entering upon the narrative of my life at this place, mention of events which occurred in Virginia City just at the time I removed from that place to Harris Gulch will be timely.

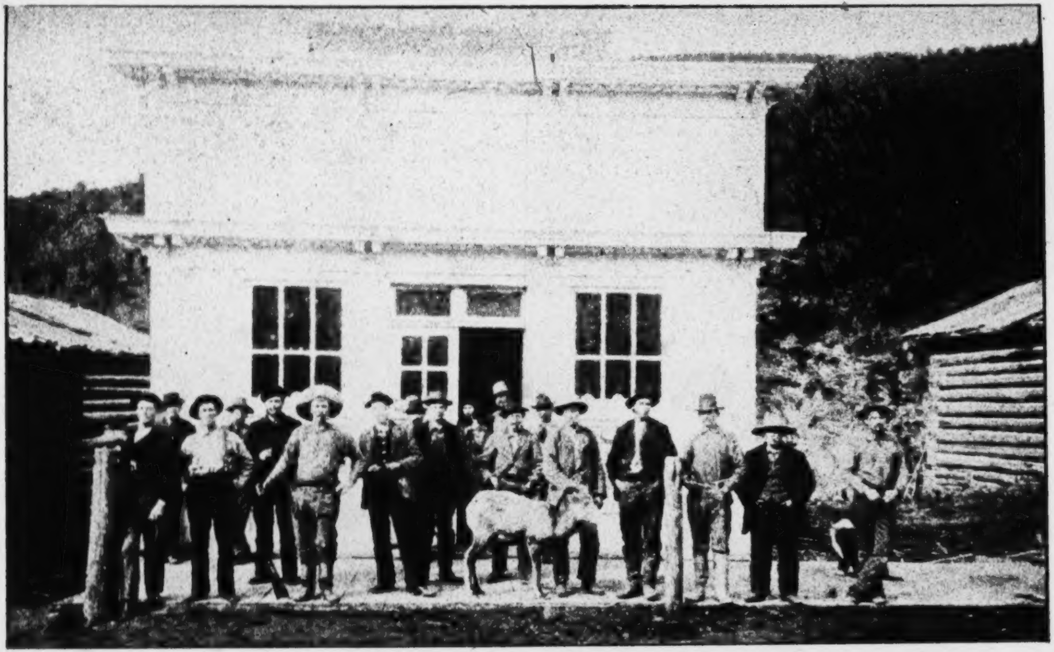
I refer to the organization of the Montana Vigilantes and the breaking up by them of the band of desperadoes and criminals who had gained a strong foothold in the Territory and were daily engaged in the commission of robberies and murders in this and other vicinities.

In all newly settled mining districts is felt the keen necessity for some effective organization of a judicial and protective character far more than it is in other places where the pursuits of commerce and agriculture mainly attract the attention and occupy the time of the inhabitants and where less excitement prevails.

The life of the pioneer settler in an agricultural country is generally one attended by hard work, of more or less isolation and privation; and it is usual that those who break up the virgin soil of the prairies or seek to clear a wild forest farm are of the hard working classes, unneedful of assistance from judge or jury to enable them to maintain rights which are seldom invaded and whose differences are for the most part, in the early days of the country, so very slight as to cause but little stir, and such as are usually easily arbitrated.

The dweller in a mining camp is subject to constant excitement, perpetual temptation and an activity far different from that of the staid and sedate inhabitants of agricultural districts and indeed a vast difference exists between these and the motley groups of miners, merchants and professional men, interspersed thickly with refugees, sharpers and the dangerous classes that swagger, armed to the teeth, through the diggings and infest the trails leading to and from the gulches where lies the object of worship of all—Gold.

In these newly discovered gold gelds the population invariably assembles at some particular gulch or spot in an incredulous short space of time. Let a lone prospector make the discovery of a rich lead or good pay rock and ere a month has passed to this new Eldorado has flocked from all directions hundreds and even thousands of people of all



In a Mining Camp—Waiting for the Mail Coach.

classes, ages and kinds, and as might be expected the daring, venturesome and reckless are the first to arrive.

Thus is explained the reason why a new town or mining camp in the west is, until of sufficient age to possess a well organized government, invaribly controlled by the more lawless and desperate element.

Suppose, for instance, that the police of one of our great cities were withdrawn for even the brief space of one month. Can you imagine the result, the crimes that would be committeed, and the extent to which the lawless and desperate would carry their nefarious callings?

If, then, even in the old settled communities it would be almost impossible to restrain the dangerous classes, a fair idea may be formed of the task in a community where tenfold in number, fearless in character, removed from the restraint of civilized society and beyond the control of the authority which enforces obedience to the law, and supplied with money to an extent unknown to their equals in the east, the desperate and criminal classes predominate.

That the west has not been made a sink of iniquity and the scene of bloodshed such as was never before witnessed is due solely to the sturdy miners of the west, who as a rule are possessed of an unusual love of fair play and are prone to prompt and decisive action in emergencies.

It is admitted that in the early days there was much of evil in the west, but it must also be remember that nowhere was there so much which was sternly opposed to dishonesty and violence as in the mountains The miners were careless of personal appearance and outward show to a marked degree but possessed of the intrinsic value of manly uprightness in a measure no where else more fully developed.

Middling or half way-way people were unknown. A person in making a trip toward the far west either became better or worse, and when once he came under the keen eye of the experienced pioneer was invariably soon weighed in the balance and compelled to seek the association of the class to which he rightfully belonged.

Should there be needed a man to serve in any capacity requiring self-reliance, courage and integrity, let the search cease upon the finding of an "honest miner" who has by a jury of mountaineers been tried and found true, for search where you will a more trustworthy and reliable man cannot be found.

One of the chief evils of a mining camp may be noted in the saloons which are invariably to be found in amazing number. These add greatly to the number of crimes and to the facilities for their perpetration. Poisonous liquors are sold to all comers and consumed in quantities sufficient to drive excitable men to madness and to the commission of homicide on the slightest provocation, and the villainous compounds there dispensed under the name of whiskey are such as quickly transform the sober-minded into the raving maniac and arouse within the criminal the thirst for blood, which, although at times lies latent, still is always present within his depraved heart.

The absence of good female society in any due proportion to the numbers of the opposite sex, also operates as a lack of restraint, for men become stern, cruel and rough to a surprising degree under such circumstances.

Women of easy virtue are always present in number, habited in the most costly and attractive apparel, brazen-faced and bold, promenading the streets and receiving fabulous sums for their purchased favors.

Public gambling houses are upon every street, with open doors and loud music, and are resorted to in broad daylight by hundreds; and as a matter of course these places furnish another fruitful sourch of crime, inasmuch as all quarrels are commonly decided on the spot, by an appeal to brute force, the stab of a knife or the discharge of a revolver.

In fact, all the temptations to vice are present in full display, with money in abundance to secure the gratification of the ruling passion of the mountaineer—the desire for novelty and excitement.

Such was Virginia City at the time of which I write and under these circumstance it became absolutely necessaary that the good, law-loving and order-sustaining men should unite for mutual protection and for the salvation of the community.

Once having united the demands of necessity provided that they must act in harmony, punish crime, repress disorder and prevent outrage or the inevitable result would follow that the throes of anarchy would envelope society and their organization would fail from the start. Secrecy of council and membership was all-essential, numbers were required to cope successfully with the bands of murderers, desperadoes and robbers who infested the country, and none but extreme penalties inflicted with promptitude would prove of avail in the attempt to quell the spirit of the desperadoes with whom they had to contend.

Knowing and fully realizing all this and with the full knowledge that were their acts to become known to the desperate men with whom they were to deal, death would be theirs, five brave and true, law-loving and law-abiding men in Virginia City, in company with four men of like character in Bannack, initiated the movement which resulted in the formation of the organization known as the "Montana Vigilantes," a tribunal, supported by an omnipresent executive, comprising within itself nearly every good man in the territory and pledged to render to friend or foe impartial justice, regardless of politics, clime, creed or race.

As if by magic the face of society was changed within a few short weeks; for it was soon known that in tones that might not be disregarded the voice of justice had spoken. Holding in one hand the swift-descending and inevitable sword of retribution and in the other the invisible yet effectual shield of protection the Vigilantes warned the thief to steal no more, commanded the brawler to cease from strife and struck from his nerveless grasp the weapon of the assassin.

Was the struggle a mild and fitful one? No; for it was not before more than one hundred valuable lives had been pitilessly sacrificed and twenty-four miscreants had met a dog's doom as the reward of their crimes that the end came and the "reign of terror" in Montana was brought to a close.

The cost of life necessary to bring about this result was indeed a heavy one and the necessity for the sacrifice a deplorable event, but the results which followed gave sufficient proof of the effectiveness of the methods employed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BAND OF DESPERADOES—A ROAD AGENT'S ARMS—CAPTURE AND EXECUTION BY THE VIGILANTES OF GEO. IVES—THE EFFECTS—A WORD RELATIVE TO THE VIGILANTES.

As may be imagined from what has been written, life in Virginia City at this time was far from pleasant. The ruffians who had first arrived served as a nucleus around which gathered the desperate, dishonest and lawless, and soon a band was organized with captain, lieutenants, secretary, road agents and outsiders who became the terror of the country.

Their chief was a man named Plummer, who came to the section from Orofino and who had to his credit the killing of several men, the commission of many desperate deeds, and who was, withal, one of the most hardened and desperate of criminals.

He was considered the quickest and most accurate shot with a revolver of any man in the mountains and a man to whom fear was unknown. Naturally quick witted and intelligent, capable of winning and maintaining the friendship of those about him, he skillfully laid his plans and finally succeeded in securing his own election or appointment to the position of sheriff, and was thus placed in a position which gave him peculiar facilities for the planning and execution of robberies and other crimes, for, as deputies he had associatsd with him those who were at all times ready to do his bidding and aid him in his nefarious schemes of plunder.

The headquarters of the marauders was Rattlesnake Ranch some twelve or fifteen miles from Virginia City, which was often visited by Plummer, and the robbers were accustomed to camp in small wakiups of pine boughs above and below it, watching, ready for fight, flight or plunder.

To such a system was the maraudings of these desperadoes brought that horses, men and coaches were marked in some understood manner, to designate them as fitting subjects for plunder, and thus the liers in wait were enabled to communicate the intelligence of their approach to the members of the band in time to prevent the escape of the victims.

Usually the arms of the road agent were a pair of revolvers, a large bore double-barrelled shot-gun with the barrels cut short, and one or more knives or daggers. Mounted upon well-trained and fleet horses they would lay in ambush awaiting their prey, and, as the traveler approached near them, would dash out on a keen run with the command, "Halt! Throw up your hands!" If the victim neglected or refused to do as bid certain death followed as the penalty, but in case he complied one or two would remain mounted covering the party with their guns, which were loaded with buckshot, while others of the band disarmed and searched the unfortunates and compelled them to produce forthwith all valuables or funds in their possession.

This having been accomplished and a search for concealed property having been made, away rode the robbers to their appointed rendezvous, where they reported the work and divided the spoils.

It was for the suppression of such crimes as this, for the restraint and breaking up of this band and the securing of safety to travelers and those possessed of money in pocket and valuables on person that the Vigilance Committee was organized.

The first of the band of desperadoes to be captured, convicted and executed by this Committee was George Ives, and the history of his crimes would serve as the subject for a volume of considerable size.

He was a young man of probably twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age and propossessing in appearance. His eyes were blue and his hair and complexion light while usually his beard was closely shaven. His height was nearly six feet and his ordinary dress a neat suit of black, with the addition of a soldier's overcoat in winter. A white felt hat at all times constituted his head dress. The carriage of this renowned desperado was sprightly and his coolness imperturbable as long practice in confronting danger of all kinds had made him absolutely fearless and he would face death with an indifference and unconcern both astonishing and amazing. It was this spirit of reckless bravado with which he was animated that made him the terror of the citizens.

His last crime and the one for which he was executed by the Vigilantes, was the murder of a young man whose life he took for the purpose of securing possession of a team in addition to a considerable sum of money which the former had in his possession.

The murder occurred near a place known as Dempsey's Ranch, some few miles from Virginia City, and the body of the victim lay some time frozen stiff and stark among the sage brush whither it had been dragged before being discovered, and when found the marks of a small lariat were on the dead man's wrists and neck, showing that he had been dragged through the brush, while living and after being shot. When found he lay upon his face, his right arm bent across his breast and his left grasping the willows about him.

News of the discovery of the murdered man's body soon spread, and the man who had found the remains at once conveyed them to Nevada City—a place situated but little more than one-half mile from Virginia City and in reality a part of the latter town—where they lay for half a day in the wagon, exposed to view, after which a coffin was procured and the interrment took place.

The sight of the murdered man who had been thus foully shot down and tortured to death aroused amongst the citizens the greatest indignation and at once it was resolved that prompt and decisive action be taken to trace, capture and punish the perpetrator of the awful deed.

Twenty-five men at once volunteered their services in aid of the undertaking and, leaving Nevada about 10 o'clock in the forenoon, after having before starting taken an obligation binding them to mutual support, etc., traveled on with speed and all due caution toward the valley of the Stinkingwater, the well-known rendezvous of the desperadoes.

Avoiding the traveled road they proceeded onward until near their destination, when a pilot was secured and the march again taken up.

About half-past three o'clock the following morning, after having ridden these many hours, suffering intensely from the cold and being nearly famished with hunger, the party of brave men neared the spot for which they were headed, and in response to the command of their leader dismounted and remained silently waiting for the approach of daybreak.

At the first peep of day the party again moved onward with caution, and soon the bark of a dog warned them of their near approach to a camp or habitation. Putting spurs to their horses they dashed forward, breaking ranks to the right and left at the same time and in an instant had surrounded a small wakiup of brush and halted—each with his shot-gun in position for instant discharge and bearing upon the rude habitation.

The leader dismounted and to the eight or ten men laying about in front of the structure, all wrapped in blankets, delivered the command "Lay quiet."

Examination of the faces of the men disclosed the features of the person sought and upon whom suspicion of the murder rested and he was at once placed under arrest.

Leaving the main body of the party in charge of the remaining prisoners, the leader, in company with a guard of four, escorted the accused man to the spot where the murder had been committed and there accused him of the crime.

Stoutly did he protest his innocence, but admitted knowledge of the deed, at the same time disclosing the name of the guilty person to his captors. The name given by this man was that of George Ives, and he it was who was afterwards proven guilty.

Returning to the camp, Ives was arrested in company with one or two others and the start made for Virginia City. On the way to that place the accused man by strategy gained an advantage over his guard and before they were aware of his designs he was galloping away at a lively speed. Pursuit was made and Ives captured, but not, however, before a chase of several miles had been given and the escaping criminal had been forced to halt by the use of firearms.

Shortly after sundown the party and their captives arrived at Nevada and there the prisoners were separated and chained and kept until the following morning, and it was then decided that here their trial should be held.

The forenoon of the following day saw the still growing number of miners, merchants and artisans wending their way to Nevada and all the morning was passed in consultation as to the best methods of trial and also in private examinations of the prisoners. Friends of the accused were to be found in all classes of society and these were busily at work endeavoring to create a sentiment in his favor, while a large multitude were there who were firm in the belief that the right man had been caught at last and resolved if such should prove to be the case to leave no loophole of escape in the way of technical forms of law.

Much difference of opinion was developed upon the mode of trial, but it was finally decided that it should be held in the presence of the whole body of citizens and it was to be they who should render the ultimate decisions upon all questions; but lest something should escape their attention and injustice thereby be done, a delegation of twenty-four men was selected to hear the proof and act as an advisory jury.

Late in the afternoon the trial of Ives began and continued until nightfall. During the night following the prisoners were again chained and closely guarded.

With the opening of the trial the following morning the miners informed all concerned that the trial must conclude at 3 o'clock. This was agreed to.

The scenes around that court of justice are not to be described. A wagon served as the Judge's bench, witness stand and prisoner's box, and forming a circle round and about this stood the stern and determined guard, attired in every kind of habiliments.

The compressed lips and attentive faces of the jury gave full evidence of their firm resolve to see that justice should be done and the determination within each to do his duty without fear or favor.

Close by stood the expectant crowd of miners, thoughtfully and steadily gazing upon the scene and listening intently to the evidence, while beyond this close phalanx, fretting and shifting around its outer edge moved with quick and uncertain motion the waving line of desperadoes and sympathizers with the criminals.

It was indeed a momentous crisis, but bravely and with unfaltering hearts did those sturdy miners and honest, law-loving citizens, step by step, inch by inch, struggle on in the endeavor that justice might prevail and right be done.

The evidence in the case of Ives was not confined to the charge of murder, but further showed that he had been acting in the character of a robber as well as that of a murderer. There was an instinctive and unerring conviction that the worst man in the community was on trial, but it was a difficult task, even after all the proof, to convict him, surrounded as he was by friends and accomplices, and at times it almost seemed that all the labor was to end in disastrous failure.

But justice was to triumph at last, and the argument in the case having terminated the issue was, in the first place left to the decision of the jury who had been selected for that purpose, and they, after retiring and consulting, returned in little less than half an hour with the report that Ives was guilty—but one dissenting vote being cast.

By a vote of those present the report was adopted and immediately following, amid the greatest excitement it was voted that he be forthwith hung by the neck until dead.

The attempts of his friends to postpone this proceeding, and his own earnest appeals were passed by unheeded and at once preparations were made for his execution.

An unfinished house, having only the side walls up was selected as the spot best adapted for carrying into effect the sentence of death. The preparations were simple in the extreme, but nevertheless sufficient for all purposes.

Planting a long pole against the foot of one of the walls on the inside of the structure, it was allowed to lean across a cross-beam and at the place where the two met was tied the fatal cord, with the open noose dangling fearfully at its lower end. A large, rough box served as a platform and trap.

In less than an hour from the time sentence was passed the condemned man was led to the rude scaffold. The excited multitude surged and swayed in all directions, revolvers flashed in the bright moonlight—for it was now quite late in the evening—and upon every hand were to be heard the mingled expressions of satisfaction and rejoicing over the triumph of justice and the curses and threats of those in sympathy with the doomed man.

But amid all this, the guard stood by their positions with grim firmness and a determination characteristic of honest and fearless men, ready to beat back the surging mass should they attempt a rescue.

As the prisoner stepped upon the fatal platform the noise and tumult ceased and the stillness became painful. The rope was adjusted, and, the usual opportunity having been given the prisoner to speak, after a moment's waiting the command was given, "Men, do your duty," the box flew from under the murderer's feet with a crash, and George Ives swung in the night breeze, facing the pale moon that lighted up the scene of retributive justice.

At last the deed was done. The law-abiding among the citizens breathed more freely, and all felt the most dangerous of desperadoes was dead—that the neck of crime was broken, and that the beginning of the end of the reign of terror had been witnessed.

The trial of the remaining prisoners was a short matter, and resulted in banishment from the Territory of all, with a single exception—he having turned State's evidence.

The Vigilantes from this time forward grew into general approval with wondrous rapidity, and were numerously and powerfully supported. From the first their members acted with a wisdom, a justice and a vigor never surpassed on this continent and rarely, if ever equalled. Miners, merchants, mechanics and professsional men alike joined in the movement until within an incredibly short time the road agents and their friends were in a state of constant and well-grounded fear, lest any remark they might make confidentially to an acquaintance might be addressed to one who was a member of the much-dreaded

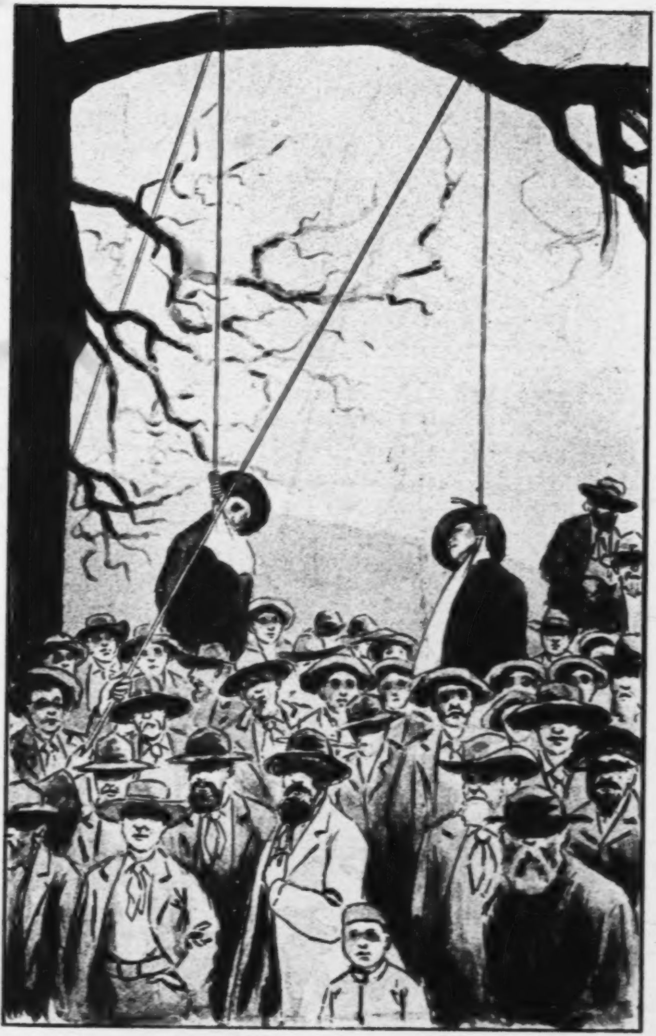
Committee.

Without hesitancy or faltering the organization continued the work so well commenced in the conviction and execution of Ives, and ere their work was accomplished into the hands of justice had been delivered and in expiation of their crimes twenty-four bloody-handed desperadoes had been executed.

While to do so may possibly cast an inference unintended, I wish before parting with this subject to call attention to a fact upon which the reader may perchance have formed an erroneous conclusion.

The work of the Vigilantes, while not in a direct course with the dictates of constitutional law, was nevertheless such as could be questioned by no one familiar with the existing state of affairs in the community in which they operated. In a well-settled and civilized community the administration of common law by self-constituted authority would be an outrage on mankind, but the sight of a few mangled corpses of beloved friends and valued citizens, the whistle of the desperado's bullet, and the plunder of the fruits of the patient toil of years spent in weary exile from home in places where civil law is as powerless as a palsied arm, alter the basis of reasoning and reverse the conclusion. Furthermore be it remembered that in this case the Sheriff was the leader of the desperadoes and his deputies were prominent members of the band.

Gladly indeed, I feel sure, would the Vigilantes have welcomed the advent of civil or military power to force an obeyance of law, but until this was furnished it was their



The Vigilance Committee at Work.

duty to preserve as best they could the society of their community and prevent and punish anarchy, arson, robbery and murder.

The honest mountaineers of the far west are the noblemen of mankind. Untrammeled by the artificial restraints of more highly organized society, character develops itself more fully and more truly there than elsewhere on earth. Those who have slept at the same watch-fire and traversed together many a league, sharing hardships and privations, are drawn together by ties which civilization knows nothing of. As soon as towns are started at once commences the organization of society, and truly cheering indeed is the ready hospitality, the unfeigned welcome and the friendly toleration of personal peculiarities which mark the character of the better class of honest western people.

The mountains may be said also to bound the paradise of amiable and energetic women. There seems to be a law, unwritten, but scarcely ever transgressed, which assigns to a virtuous and amiable woman a power for good which she can never hope to attain elsewhere.

In his wildest excitement a mountaineer respects a woman and anything like an insult offered to a lady would be resented by any bystanding miner.

For the preservation of those sacred rights and customs and the maintenance of these the Montana Vigilantes banded togethe

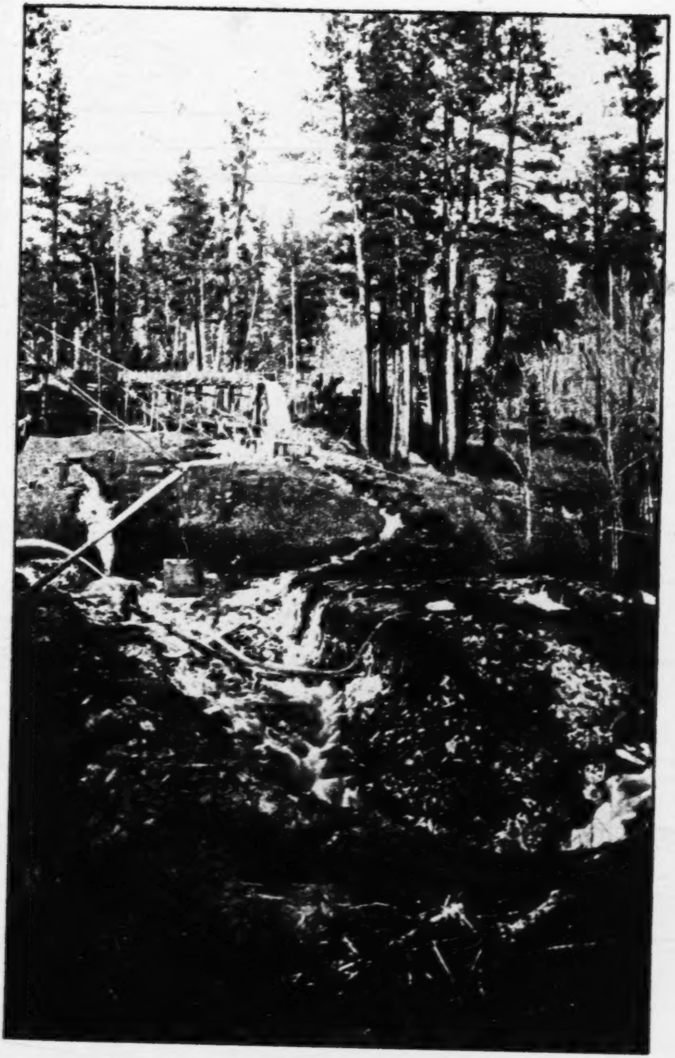
CHAPTER XVII.

HARRIS GULCH—AN ACCIDENT IN THE MINES—A TRIP TO ST. LOUIS, MO.—RETURN TO BANNACK, MONT.

Among the miners at Harris Gulch were two brothers named Lindsley whose claim was but a short distance below the spot occupied by my little log cabin. Their mine like the others in that vicinity was worked by means of the action of water, or, as the miners would term it, the hydraulic process.

From a large reservoir located far up the mountain side the water was carried to the spot at which the mine was situated in a large canvas hose, about six inches in diameter, and as it passed through a small nozzle, would be directed upon the bank of the mine where work was in progress.

The action of the water as it was thus thrown with such terrific force upon the bank of dirt would soon undermine a large portion of the hillside which would cave to the



Hydraulic Mining—Sluice Boxes and Canvas Hose.

gulch below where it was then treated for the separation of the minerals from the earth.

While thus engaged in work one of these brothers was caught by a caving bank, while his brother was absent from the mine, and lay for some time pinioned to the earth by the bank of rocks and dirt which had fallen upon him. The accident occurred in the morning, and about the middle of the forenoon I started, as was my custom, to visit the working miners with a lunch.

As I neared the spot where the unfortunate man lay I heard his groans and at once hurried to his side. He lay upon his face in the midst of a small pool of water, the earth piled high upon his lower limbs and his back so weighted down with the caving rock and earth that it was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep his head from being forced into the pool in which he lay.

I at once opened a small drain and allowed the water to run from about him, and perceiving that it would be an impossible task to alone and unaided remove him from his perilous position, made him as comfortable as circumstances would allow, and hurriedly departed for a doctor and assistance.

A journey of fifteen miles—for Virginia City was the nearest point at which a doctor's services were to be procured— lay before me, but urged on by the thought of the suffering man I pushed forward with all possible speed, urging the horse which I rode to the utmost limit of his endurance and in scarcely an hour's time I had notified a physician of the accident and that gentleman was on his way to the mine.

As I rode along on my way to town I stopped at one of the mines and told them of Mr. Lindsley's condition and by the time I returned in company with the doctor the men had succeeded in liberating the injured man and had conveyed him to his cabin.

An examination of his wounds disclosed his injuries to be of a very serious nature. One limb was broken and shattered in a terrible manner, his body was bruised and bleeding and his back so severely injured as to cause a partial paralysis of his lower limbs. As best we could we cared for him during the long weeks of his confinement and as he recovered sufficiently to be able to travel he asked that I undertake a journey to the States and care for him until his eastern home was reached, offering to pay me for such service a liberal compensation.

With the consent of brother I agreed to the arrangement and late that fall—for he was unable to travel until that time—we left Harris Gulch for St. Louis, near which place his parents resided.

Providing ourselves with a team and wagon we traveled south several hundred miles finally arriving at Bear River, in Utah Territory, where we found at that time the terminal of the Union Pacific Ry. which was being then built through to California.

Boarding the train—which by the way was the first I had ever as yet seen—we proceeded on our journey until St. Louis was reached, at which place the gentleman's father met us and in his company we went to his home.

There I staid until early the following spring when I undertook the long journey home alone. Going by rail as far as Ogden I then boarded a coach and after a long. wearisome journey arrived at Bannack, Mont. in April, the journey requiring about twelve days and an outlay of $225.00 for car and coach fare, besides meals which could not be procured for less than $1.00 each. Arriving here I learned that brother had, during my absence, become discouraged with the outlook in that section and returned to Denver, where my mother and older brother still lived. Thus I found myself alone in the world, although I cannot say that I was without friends.

Before again taking up the story of my life here and the events following I shall now devote a chapter to the subject of facts relative to Montana, for it was now that my home became permanent in the then Territory but now State.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN MONTANA—PRODUCTS OF THE MINES—THE STOCK INDUSTRY—A "ROUND-UP"—"BRANDING"—"CUTTING-OUT"—A "STAMPEDE"—DRIVING TO MARKET—THE "COWBOYS"—FARMING LANDS.

To the average man, few subjects have more interest than the one of gold. Since history first began its records gold and its mining have played an important factor in the history and destiny of nations.

The general proposition of gold mining is undoubtedly quite well understood by nearly all persons, and, such being the fact, all know that almost invariably the sections producing the precious metal are looked upon at first as a "placer camp," or, more plainly speaking, places where gold-bearing rock has become so disintegrated by natural causes as to leave the metal practically free from its original surroundings and in such condition as to permit of its being gathered and saved by the use of water and

A RICH FIND AT LAST!!

BLIGHTED HOPE:
THE LEAD IS WORTHLESS.

quicksilver.

While it may be true that the bonanza deposits of this nature have been already discovered and worked almost to exhaustion, yet there still remain in Montana vast area of mineral producing sections which are capable of yielding gold-producing rock or quartz which will return to those who work the same far more wealth than has ever as yet been uncovered.

As to the identity of the person who first discovered gold in Montana there exists some doubt, but to Francis Finlay is generally accorded the distinction, the place at which the metal was found being accepted as Gold Creek and the date as 1852. Eight years later Henry Thomas engaged in regular mining, his first sluice box being hewed from logs.

Two years before this Thomas Adams, Reese Anderson and James and Granville Stuart had found quite bright prospects in that same locality, but were hindered in their work and finally driven away by Indians, who became quite troublesome. In '62, however, the Stuart brothers returned and commenced work near the stream, their tools and lumber for sluice boxes being "packed" from Walla Walla.

About the same time, near the place known as Pioneer, which was farther up the creek, Perry W. McAdow and a man named Blake located, and were supplied with tools and other much needed articles by Capt. Mullan who was then commander of the forces which were engaged in the construction of a government wagon road which was being built from Fort Benton to Walla Walla.

It was in 1862 also that the famous Grasshopper mine were discovered, on the creek of the same name, by Joh White, and to this vicinity flocked hundreds of miners fro various localities, the majority of them, however, comin from Gold Creek and the Orofino and Salmon River mine in Idaho.

It was the rush to this locality at that time which le to the establishment of the town of Bannack. The mine mentioned were very rich and the little town grew rapidl soon becoming not only the capital of Beaverhead County, but of Montana as well. In this place the only capital building Montana ever had is still standing.

The following year Alder Gulch became famous, owing to the finding of very rich mines in its bed by William Fairweather. This was doubtless the greatest discovery in the history of mining in Montana. The yield of gold from these mines up to the present day is estimated at not les than a hundred millions of dollars, and its golden sands i still yielding its treasure to numerous busy miners al along its eighteen or twenty miles of length.

The grand rush to this new discovery occasioned the starting of another town, Virginia City, and in but a short time this had grown to considerable proportions and was well entitled to the claim of 10,000 people. The town soon succeeded Bannack as the capital of Montana, retaining the same for many years.

In the year 1864 John Cowan discovered gold in Last Chance gulch, where the city of Helena now stands. Again did there occur a shifting of population from one locality to another and in but a few years Helena was the leading city and also possessed the capital.

Business increased in proportions very rapidly at this place, inasmuch as it was a general distributing point for a vast mining country, and soon the business buildings began to encrouch upon the miners' territory, this condition of affairs eventually forcing them from the gulch, and in portions of the city of Helena there to-day exists localities where the buildings cover sand rich in gold.

The placer mines of Silver Bow and German Gulch were discovered at about this time and later came the rich "diggings" of Little Blackfoot, Jefferson, Washington, McLellan, Lincoln, Nevada Creek, Bear's Mouth, Pioneer and New Chicago.

In 1865 Confederate Gulch, French Bar, New York, Montana Bar, Eldorado Bar and American Bar followed each other in rapid succession and as an illustration of their wealth I will state that in 1866 two teams, conveyed to Fort Benton for shipment gold dust from these mines to the value of two and one-half millions of dollars.

Thus might the list be lengthened almost indefinitely but instead of enumerating more fully I will make mention of another species of mining which followed closely that of the placer.

But a few years of placer mining served to bring about the uncovering of the quartz lodes from which the glaciers had ground the gold found in these gulches.

Along Alder Gulch alone many leads of gold-bearing quartz were discovered, and soon after the finding of the same ten quartz mills were at work upon the ore, which showed the free, glittering yellow metal.

At Mill Creek, Red Bluff and Sterling other mills soon followed and ere many years had passed scores of mills were running in the various mining sections.

The pioneer mill of Beaverhead county was erected on the Grasshopper Creek near Bannack. The stamps were of wood, shod with wagon tires, and the pioneer smelter of Montana as well as the only cupel furnace ever built in the now state was erected at Argenta, a suburb of Bannack. Nearly a hundred mines were discovered in this district and at this furnace there was produced large disks of pure silver—for silver as well as gold was abundant in these mines—several feet in diameter.

Thirty years ago, when hunters of gold made their discoveries through this section, with little effort they received quick and rapid returns for their labor. It was not so much the problem then how to procure their money through the summer as how to spend it during the winter—a statement which I feel confident many of our citizens who have passed through those exciting times can attest; and a still more important problem was presented to the man who attempted to convey his gold dust, so burdensome by reason of its weight, away from the confines of the mining camp and safely back to the States, for he not only stood great chance of losing his treasure, but, more important still, his life.

Following this period came the time when ore began to be shipped east for treatment. The first period of this improvement embodied the hauling of excessively rich quartz to the mills of the east, but such ore must of necessity contain $100 and upwards per ton in order to pay transportation alone.

Then came the time when small gold mills were erected and crude operations were performed by which a small percentage of the contents of rich ore was saved on the ground.

Passing on, the present period presents itself. Various appliances to cheapen the cost of production, such as steam appliances for hoisting both water and ore, followed by new ideas and inventions regarding automatic handling and crushing and extra percentage saved both by fire and water and by improved machinery have brought about a wonderful change.

Mines to-day are paying yearly dividends which would in early days have been considered fabulous fortunes, from ore under five dollars per ton, that, twenty years ago, could not have paid the mining alone had the metal been perfectly free.

From 1862 down to and including 1868, it has been estimated by reliable authorities, the gold yield of Montana was $86,600,000 and continually since that date has the production been going on, and yet those who are considered in a position to judge of future prospects and probabilities assert that the vast treasure houses of the state have as yet been scarcely touched.

In addition to the gold mines of which mention has been made there exists numerous silver properties both rich and productive and exceedingly valuable.

The first silver mill erected in the State was at Philipsburg, in Deer Lodge (now Granite) county, where it is still running. The Wheeler pans of this mill were lost in the quicksands of Virginia River while on their way from San Francisco, but they were recovered and have since amalgamated many tons of silver.

Copper is produced in extensive quantities, cobalt mines have been opened in several localities and coal exists in almost unlimited quantities. In Park county alone it is estimated that the coal mines will furnish 500 tons per day for 300 years, and in Yellowstone county the mammoth bed has from ten to fifteen feet of workable coal and contains 500,000,000 tons, and the other workable beds will yield at least 300,000,000 tons.

Vast deposits of iron ores await future mining. Large quantities of the hydrated oxide, carrying gold, form the caps of thousands of mines in the state; bog ores are found in the Little Belt and Judith mountains; specular magnetic iron exists in extensive deposits in the mountains; spathic ores in the coal measures and an extensive vein of black-band ore intersects the coal field on Bear Creek.

Bismuth is found in the St. Julian mine in Emigrant Gulch; antimony is mined in Missoula and shipped east in large quantities; stream tin is found in extensive amounts in the placers in various localities, and nickel occurs in the Belle Stowe mine on Thompson River.

Sapphires are abundant in various localities, and these deposits will no doubt in the future produce great wealth. At Eldorado Bar on the Missouri are found oriental rubies, oriental topazes, oriental emeralds and oriental amethysts. Telluride of gold is found in some of the mines at Butte, Mill Creek, Neihart, and in Tucker Gulch. Some from the latter locality assayed by the Bank of England, gave $325,000 per ton in gold.

Thus it will be seen by this brief outline of the mineral products of Moutana, that the state stands far up in the ranks of those of the Union in the way of mineral wealth.

As to the matter of stock raising the state is unsurpassed by any in the Union. The subject of the live stock business, or the breeding, rearing and marketing of cattle, horses and sheep is one of peculiar interest to men of all vocations.

The western man finds in it much of interest, as to a great number of them it is a means of money making. The tradesman, merchant and mechanic of the west are interested in it, for upon its success depends in a great measure his own. The eastern man is also interested for it is a part of his living, and, with a part of the laboring classes, its products, namely, animal flesh, is one of their rare luxuries.

As with all trades, that of the cattle business in the west has peculiarities which marks it in distinction from other sections, some of which I shall note and endeavor to make as plain as possible to the reader.

In Montana, as in all stock raising countries, instead of the word "farm" the word "ranch" is invariable used; the common laborer is termed a "cow-boy" and the horse used is known as a "cow-horse."

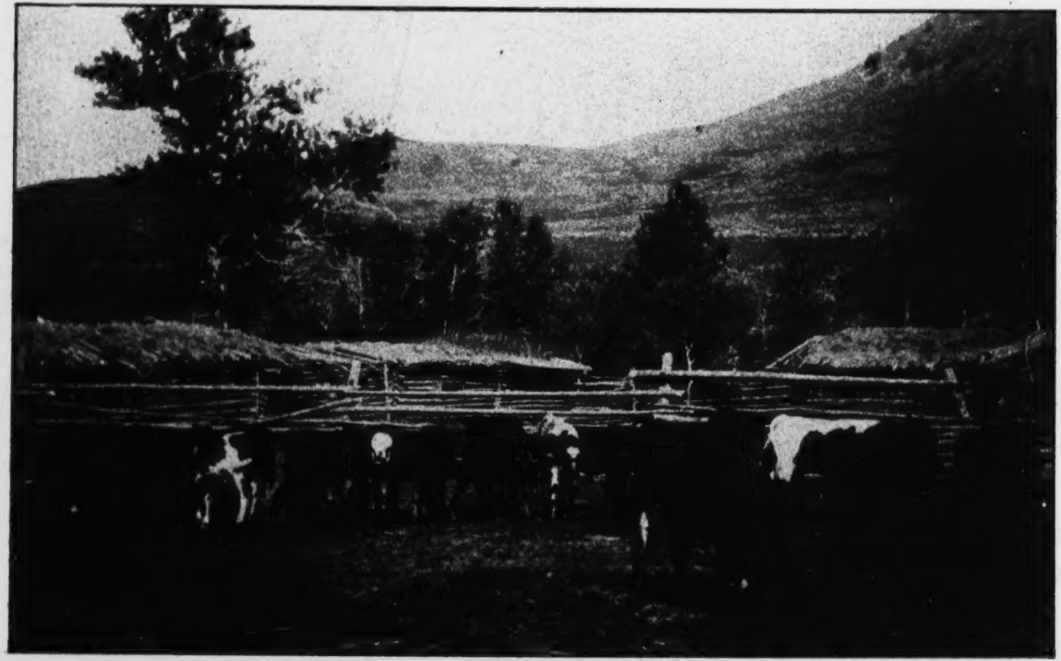
The first move of a man who intends engaging in the business of raising stock is to purchase or exercise his right as an American citizen and "take-up" a sufficient amount of land to give him a footing whereon to build a house and corrals.

A point centrally located as to grazing lands and in close proximity to an abundant supply of good water is chosen and here is erected a small house and enclosure, or corral, both of which are usually of logs.

The next move is to select what is termed a "r anch brand" and earmarks, and whatever letter or letters, figure or device he select he endeavors to have it as different as possible from those in use by other ranchmen in that section of the state.

The selected "brand" is then recorded with the proper officer of the county, and accompanying the same is a statement of the number of horses and cattle he has at that time bearing the "brand" and ear marks—taking from the officer a certificate of his acts, and from that time forward all animals found bearing these marks are his property and by him may be claimed and taken possession of wherever found. The stock laws of Montana are very complete and provide ample penalties for their violation.

Should a stock man sell an animal from his herd the original brand is "vented," or, in plainer language, above or below the first brand or upon some other part of the animal is placed a second brand, which is also recorded,



Young Stock in Corral Awaiting Branding.

and which indicates that the original owner has relinquished title to the animal. To illustrate clearly, the "brands" and "vent" as they appear upon our own horses and cattle are here shown:

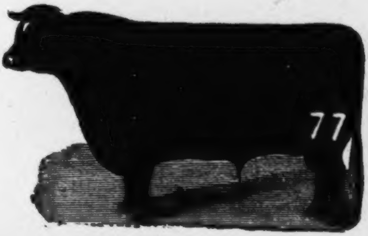


Illustration showing design and location of the Collins "Ranch Brand."

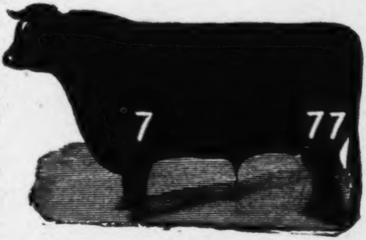


Illustration showing "Vent" for Collins "Ranch Brand," the "7" on the left shoulder indicating that the animal has been sold.

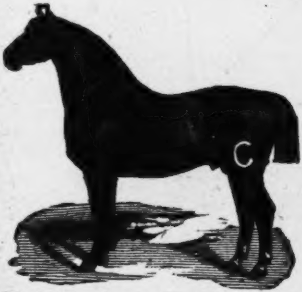


Illustration showing Horse "Brand."

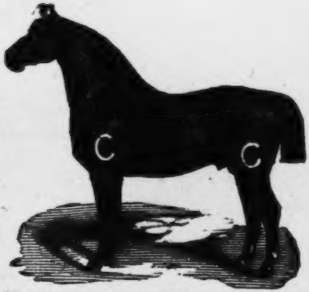


Illustration showing "Vent" for same,

When the entire stock of a ranchman is disposed of the purchaser is given articles of writing, which are proper subjects of record, which are evidence of the transfer of ownership of all stock bearing the "brand" and ear marks there in described.

The purchaser thus becomes entitled to the use of the "brand" and ear marks and may continue its use upon the animals which he has purchased and their increase if he so desires.

The young animals are, to as great an extent as possible, branded while quite young. It is customary for the cowboys of neighboring ranches to work in concert in this work, driving from the range to some one corral all the stock to be found, this work usually being done twice each year, both in the spring and fall. The work of thus gathering the stock for branding or shipment is termed a "round-up."

When the stock is gathered they are driven to a corral and when they are safely enclosed the cowboys proceed to catch the calves and colts with the lasso and draw them outside the corral, or as is sometimes to case, to one corner of the same, where another cowboy ropes the animal about the heels.

Drawing their lasso tightly the struggling and frightened young animal is stretched at full length upon the ground and while one man with a sharp knife proceeds to cut the proper ear marks another places against its side, shoulder or hip, as the position of the brand requires, a red-hot branding iron which has been heated in a small open fire

Branding Young Stock.

built close by.

The heated iron burns not only the hair, but the skin and flesh as well, and the brand forever remains plainly outlined

In deciding upon the brand of a calf or colt the only guide is the action of the young animal itself, as all are given the brand of their mother. They are watched closely and a calf which follows a 77 cow is given a 77 brand; a colt which is mothered by a C mare is given a C brand, and so on.

When the work of branding all calves and colts thus gathered has been accomplished, those which do not appear to be mothered by any animal are separated from the rest of the "bunch" or herd and sold to the highest bidder.

These animals are termed "Mavericks" and the money received from such sale is placed in what is known as the "Maverick Fund"—a fund which is handled by the Stock Association of which nearly all ranchmen are members, and devoted to the defraying of expenses of prosecuting violators of the stock laws.

To supply with saddle horses a ranch whereon there is kept five thousand head of cattle at least seventy-five to one hundred mares are necessary, for as a rule only geldings are used as saddle horses, and during the time of the semi-annual "round-up" or gathering of stock, each rider is supplied with from eight to ten horses.

This class of horses are hardy, small-sized animals bordering closely on the pony in appearance and size.

Their only food is grass and yet they are capable of great endurance and long journeys.

The life of a cowboy during these seasons is far from being an easy one. Arising with the early morning they go hurrying hither and thither far away across the open prairie, about the foothills, up the mountain side and through the valleys searching for stock.

As a "bunch" is found they are headed for camp and as soon as that place has been reached, again the tireless rider gallops away in search of more animals.

They camp wherever night overtakes them and early the next morning are again in the saddle and away across the prairie.

At the general camp or headquarters is the "grub wagon" and cook for the "round-up" and for those who are within easy distance as the hour for meals arrive is provided good food, their employers paying therefor at a stated rate per day for each man.

The cowboys, as a rule, are bright, active, intelligent young men, generous and liberal to a fault, and withal possessed of many noble qualities. True it is there are some worthless, low and degraded men among their number but those of this character constitute but a small minority.

For sixteen long years my home has been surrounded by these men and they have been associated with my daily life, and after this experience I am prepared to say that the average Montana cowboy is a fair-minded, noble-hearted, generous and whole-souled man.

The "Cattle Queen" "Mothering" an Injured Cowboy.

Many and many is the poor boy whose broken arm or limb I have bandaged as he lay upon the rocks or hard, dry earth of the prairie, far from house or habitation, where he had been injured by a vicious horse or enraged animal, and in this manner have I earned the title among them of "Aunty" or "Mother" and in the possession of such cognomen I cannot but feel exceeding pride, for I have learned to look upon the "boys," now that I know them so well, as true types of manly courage, generosity and activity.

Many of them are young men who have been reared in the east, possess good educations and are in our midst only by force of adverse circumstances. The world sees only the dark side of their life and nature, but let those who look upon the average Montana cowboy as a drunken, rough, half-civilized creature hesitate ere they express their opinion, for let the truth only be known and they will appear in a far different light, as should opportunity arise that self-same cowboy will prove himself the truest friend, the kindest nurse or the most generous benefactor imaginable, and beneath that wide sombrero will be found a brain of activity and under that coarse flannel garment a heart beating with kindness for a friend and overflowing with generosity for a brother in need.

I may be peculiar in my likes and dislikes, "cranky" in the eye of the world, or rough and uncouth in the opinion of the "cod-fish aristocracy" but nevertheless I would rather to-day be the "Aunty," "Mother" or "Cattle Queen" of the Montana cowboys than sit upon the throne of Queen

Victoria and direct the movements of all the Prime Ministers, Lords of the Clothesline, Grand Guards of the Back Entrance or Maids in Charge of the Cellar Stairway.

Both winter and summer all stock wander at will upon the vast and almost unbounded ranges and at times are found at a distance of from forty to fifty and even a hundred miles from the home ranch.

It is therefore an arduous task to gather the ranchman's possessions as the time arrives for the annual shipment of "beeves" which usually takes place in October.

For weeks prior to this event horseman are sent out to scour the surrounding country and bring in all animals bearing their employer's brand. This work having finally been accomplished the work of selecting those suitable for shipment is commenced.

This is termed "cutting out," and is usually done upon a large, level piece of prairie land, and is a process which requires much skill and expert horsemanship on the part of the cowboys.

When an animal is selected to be "cut out" he is adroitly and quietly maneuvered to the outer edge of the large "bunch" or herd of stock which have been gathered, and and as the proper time arrives the cowboys dash at him, and before he is aware of the fact, he is outside of and separated from the remainder of the herd; but no sooner does he discover his situation than he makes an effort to return to his companions.

At this time does the skill of the cowboy come into play. Whilst one rides behind the steer or animal,

A Typical Cowboy—Foreman on the "Cattle Queen's" Ranch.

another rides beside him, to prevent any sudden change of direction that the frightened bovine may choose to make in his endeavor to return to the "bunch".

Often the chase is close and exciting and many times the outer circle of a "round-up" will be run several times before the beef will be induced to abandon the hope of getting back into the midst of the other cattle and submit to being driven to the separate herd which is being formed of "cut-out" animals, the nucleus of which was first formed by gathering together, some little distance from the main herd, several gentle cows.

Those "cut-out" are held under herd until the required number is got together, when they are taken to the corral, herded in day time and corralled at night until the time of starting for market has arrived.

All things being ready, such as the providing of a "grub wagon," the requisite cooking utensils, provisions, etc., the start is made and for the first day or two hard driving is the custom.

For various reasons this is done; first, in order to get the stock from their accustomed range whereon they are acquainted with the surrounding country and most liable to be hard of control; second, to break or accustom them to being handled and driven and also to so tire them by reason of travel as to make them content to lie down and rest at nightfall instead of running off, as they would be sure to do were they not fatigued.

In the morning they are allowed to go out upon the range and graze along in the direction they are being driven, for two or three miles, when they will of their own accord turn into the trail and travel a few miles, after which, having drank their fill of water, they will lie down and rest for from two to four hours during the middle of the day.

Starting again they will soon turn from the road or trail and take their afternoon feed, after which they are rounded up for the night. Here they are herded during the time which intervenes before the following morning's start, one or more men remaining constantly in the saddle, being relieved at regular intervals by relays from the camp.

The herd soon becomes accustomed to following the trail and unless some incident of an unusual character occurs but little trouble is experienced after the first day or two of the journey.

Beeves being thus driven will at times become frightened and huddle together and commence running in a circle, or, as a cowboy or ranchman would term it, begin "milling."

This proceedure is very injurious to the stock, as they become frightened and over-heated, and but a short time of "milling" will reduce the value of a "bunch" of beeves several hundred dollars. When cattle once get frightened and started in this way they can best be stayed by the cowboy standing at a distance and shouting or singing to them.

Another event to be carefully guarded against at all times is a "stampede." At times during rainy and stormy seasons herds of cattle are apt to form this habit, and when once they have broken from control it is very hard to again

Captain of the "Round-up."

quiet them.

At times, as they are quietly at rest during the night, the least unusual occurrence, such as the breaking of a dry weed or stick, or a sudden and near flash of lightning, will start the herd, as if by magic, all in an instant, upon a wild, mad rush, and woe to the horse, or man, or camp that may be in their path.

The only possible safety to the cowboy is to mount and ride with them until such time as it becomes possible for him to get outside the stampeding column.

It is customary to train the herd to listen to the sound of the herder's voice as he sings. Those unfamiliar with the stock business may discredit the statement, but nevertheless it is a fact that the wildest herd, after becoming accustomed to the singing of the cowboy, will not start to run as long as they can distinctly hear the herder's voice; but if by chance the herd gets off on a real stampede it is then only by bold and daring riding that they are checked and put under control.

The instant the herd starts the cowboy urges his horse at full speed down the column and endeavors to overtake the leaders, which he does not attempt to stop suddenly but rather seeks to turn gradually to the right or left, allowing them to run in a circle which is gradually narrowed down as fast as possible until the herd is rushing wildly round and round on as small a piece of ground as is possible for them to occupy, or, in other words, until they have engaged in "milling."

Then the cowboy begins his song and shouts and soon they quiet and again are gotten under control, after which they are either held where stopped until daylight or taken to a new bed-ground at once.

Often a herd becomes scattered and, separating, run in different directions, in which case great labor is necessary to again collect them, as some will at times continue their flight until a distance as great as twenty or thirty miles has been traversed.

Many times great loss in numbers and condition is sustained by a single stampede, and a herd when once in the habit of running soon become unmanageable. Hence great caution is exercised in the handling of the bunch while upon the road to market and the cowboy must at all times be alert, wide awake and attentive to duty.

Arriving at the shipping point the cattle are placed within the yards provided for their reception and soon are loaded upon the cars and on their way to the eastern market.

The rearing, handling and shipping of horses is in the main accomplished by the same methods as that of the cattle business, while the business of sheep raising varies only in the mere points of a constant herder for the "band," and the shearing of the animals before they are shipped.

The leading natural divisions of the State of Montana, as to settlement, eligible for homes and farming operations, are the following valleys. The Missouri valley, extending from the three forks of the Missouri to the Gate of the Mountains, a large and fertile valley productive of large and fine horticultural crops; the valleys of Deer Lodge and

Marketing Wool in Great Falls, Montana.

Bitter Root, both very extensive, and that of the Flathead, lying between the main range of the Rockies and the Canibet mountains, this being a valley in which fine crops are grown without the need of irrigation; the Gallatin valley, containing in round numbers 1,200 square miles; the valley of the Madison, perhaps 100 miles in length, exclusive of parts of the river that are canyons; the Jefferson, about the same size and including the valley of the Ruby; and the Yellowstone, extending from the eastern boundary of the State to the National Park on the south central line of Montana, perhaps 500 miles in length.

The vast cattle and sheep ranges of Montana are world famous, but it also may be said that of all the states of the Union, Montana is the best favored by nature with facilities for successful farming, for the reason that the raising of stock as a by-product can be most profitably pursued.

In the state are millions of acres of land which will return annual crops of grain—land as fertile as can be found in any state, and situated along irrigation systems which are never failing in the supply of water when it is needed

For every one of these millions of acres of desirable farming land there are near by ten acres of grazing lands and upon the heavy grasses thereon growing horses, cattle and sheep may feed and grow fat.

In the eastern states the care of a few head of stock does not interfere with the sowing of seed or the gathering of crops, but the farmer grudgingly gives up even one acre of land to his stock. In Montana this is not necessary. Every good farming valley is flanked by green foothills where sheep, horses and cattle may feed, and the land is so plentiful that the securing of pasturage is an easy matter.

As long as the world stands the people will eat meat, and so long will there be a market for cattle and sheep; they are the secret of the success of the thrifty farmer and the source of his wealth; they can be raised in Montana much cheaper than in the eastern states, and good farming lands can be bought at a very low price.

CHAPTER XIX.

Return from the States to Bannack—Nursing—Life in Helena—My Savings Taken from Me—Cooking for the Miners—Marriage—Discovery of the Drum Lummon Mine—Misfortunes—Engage in the Cattle Industry.

Bannack, at which I stopped on my return from caring for the injured miner on the trip to his home in St. Louis, was a place busy with pioneer life.

The mines were paying well, the men who worked them were making enormous wages, and in consequence all was life and activity, but even though a more bustling and wide-awake town would have been hard to find, still as I reached the place and learned of my brother's absence a feeling of loneliness and homesickness was experienced such as I had never before known.

Although during my entire life I had been buffeted about by circumstances, hurried hither and thither by the decrees of Fate and pushed forward along unknown paths by uncontrollable events, still never before, with the exception of the time I was held captive by the Indians, had I been completely separated from the presence of a relative, and now that I found myself so situated a feeling of despondency settled upon me which was only shaken off by the greatest effort.

The first thing to do to bring about this result was of course, womanlike, to indulge in a "good cry," following which I brushed away the tears from my red and swollen eyes and resolved to fight the battle of life courageously, even if alone.

I was not without funds neither was I without friends, and but a few days sufficed to see me comfortably situated in the home of an acquaintance in the capacity of housekeeper and nurse of a kind, respectable lady.

My knowledge of the care of the sick was at this time but limited, but had I searched for years for an opportunity to familiarize myself with this particular line of work I doubt very much whether I could possibly have found a place where I would have been able to learn as much in so short a time as here, for, without the slightest disrespect for the dear lady whom I cared for, I will say that she either in reality or imagination was afflicted with every disease known to the medical profession.

The pain from a corn on her little toe would scarcely be quieted before her body would be tortured with the more severe ailment of inflammatory rheumatism; a slight cold in the morning usually resulted—in her opinion—in a severe attack of pneumonia in the afternoon; typhoid fever and diptheria were almost daily visitors; symptoms of peritonetis and whooping cough usually gave evidence of their presence immediately following breakfast and supper respectively; as a desert for dinner blood poisoning or small pox was usually announced, while for an afternoon amusement a slight attack of consumption or softening of the brain would be indulged in.

Thus was I kept busy, engaged in the application of every known remedy and treatment for these various ailments, until at last as spring approached and I graduated from this nurse's training school with a case of obstetrics—it was an 8-pound boy, mother and child as well as could be expected—I found myself well fitted for the work of nursing, and soon after by the help of a friend and with the recommendation of the physician under whose direction I had, alone and unaided, so successfully conducted a general "hospital" during the winter months, secured a position as under nurse for the leading physician of Helena, to which city, with the coming of spring I removed.

I was very fortunate in securing a home with a splendid family and also in the way of finding employment. Nurses were quite scarce and in consequence my services were much sought after and I received liberal compensation for my work, $25 per week being the amount I usually received for caring for the sick.

All went well with me in my new home and occupation for nearly a year and I had succeeded in saving a neat little sum of money "for a rainy day" when in February of the following year misfortune again overtook me and, as was the case with many others, my savings were taken from me and I was again left penniless and alone.

The event which brought about this condition occurred upon a cold, windy and blustering night in the month mentioned. By the bedside of a sick lady I was keeping watch, when, as the hour of three in the morning was about to be recorded by the hands of the little clock which was busily ticking upon a small stand by my side, through the small window on the opposite side of the room there suddenly flashed the ruddy glow of a distant flame.

Almost simultaneous therewith came the alarm of fire and as I peered through the glass into the storm without I could see the hurrying of men, women and children as they made their way in the direction of the conflagration.

Soon the flames, fanned by the busy winds gained headway and leaped high in the air, devouring with their fiery tongue every article, surmounting every obstacle, enveloping all within their path, and as the morning sun arose and shed light upon the scene nothing but complete and utter devastation lay in the path over which they had traversed.

Starting at the extreme upper end of the town, in a neighborhood thickly populated by Chinese and known as "Chinatown," the flames had burned a path the entire length of the city, destroying completely every dwelling, barn or other building along the line and paused in their work of destruction only when the farther limits of the town were reached.

So rapid was their progress, owing to the prevalence of the high winds, that nothing could be saved from the houses within the destroyed district, even though several persons lost their lives in an attempt to rescue their belongings.

Directly in the path of the conflagration was situated, the house of the family with whom I made my home and with them did I share the loss of every possession, only excepting the clothes worn at the time of the disaster.

My little savings—some few hundred dollars—together with every article of clothing, the carpet and furniture of my room and all else I claimed as my own and for the possession of which I had forfeited many a night of sleep and labored many an hour, week and month, were completely and irretrievably lost and once again I stood penniless and alone, far from home and relatives.

As I stood that night pressing my face closely against the frosty pane and could see those fierce flames traveling on and on, never halting or swerving from their course, I knew full well that in all probability the home I had learned to love so well would be destroyed, and with it my hard-earned savings; into that sick room, stealthily crept the Angel of Death, leaving me with the emaciated form of the dead woman as a companion.

Was it a wonder, dear reader, that amid such surroundings and under such circumstances I should feel that my cup of bitterness was filled to overflowing?

Such were my feelings, I am free to admit, and though in after years I have stood by the side of many a dying person and witnessed the flight of spirit from the body of many an unfortunate being, still never has the presence of Death seemed so close nor life so little worth living as it did then.

Now that my home in Helena was destroyed, the summons of a friend to her bedside at Silver City a mining camp some twelve miles distant, was accepted and soon after the fire I changed my abode to that place.

During the early spring months I made my home with this friend, but in May a new life opened for me.

In the mining districts, during the time of which I write, it was the custom of the miners to work in their properties during the summer months only, suspending operations as cold and stormy weather approached and resuming again as early in the spring as the weather would warrant.

Most of these men were either unmarried or had left their wives and families in the eastern States, and consequently a practice prevailed of employing a cook for the camp, all paying a proportionate amount toward defraying the expense.

The miners at Canyon Creek had, ere spring work in the mine commenced, learned of my misfortune in losing my possessions at Helena, and prompted by kindness and a desire to aid me—as well as by a craving for good cooking I firmly believe—placed the situation before me for acceptance, and, prompted by kindness and a desire to see these hardworking men as comfortable as possible—as well as a craving for the $75 per month, I know to be a fact,—

I promptly accepted the offer and with the coming of the month of May assumed the duties of "chief cook and bottle washer" of the Canyon Creek miners—the camp at which I so officiated being comprised of eighteen men.

Here I remained during the summer and winter until just before Christmas when I again returned to Helena for a couple of weeks, at the end of which time I became the wife of Mr. Nat. Collins, whom I had been acquainted with for a period of about two years.

Mr. Collins was the owner of a mine at Silver City, near where I had been employed as cook, and immediately following our marriage, which occurred on New Year's Eve, 1874, we returned to his home at the mines.

Arriving at our new home we at once commenced housekeeping by the purchasing of a large supply of provisions, and Mr. Collins also among other things bought a small cow.

While this latter fact may not to the reader appear at first glance as an important event, still if they but knew my feelings of pride as that little, scrawney, homely and apparently almost worthless animal was led through the deep snow and presented to me as I stood in the doorway of that little low log cabin, they would no doubt excuse the mention of the fact. Her purchase price was $75 and the hay upon which she was fed that winter cost from $20 to $30 per ton.

As the weather moderated, with the coming of spring, work in Mr. Collins' mine was inaugurated and during the summer we prospered and were happy. The mine we owned—I say "we" for the reason that I consider it timely to now lay claim to a share of my husband's property—was of the kind known as a placer mine and worked in the main by the "hydraulic process."

As he was at work one day during the summer of which I speak he was visited by a neighbor miner, and as Mr, Collins worked his visitor sat busily chatting, near the head of the "diggings," when a small, smooth and rather peculiarly-shaped bowlder attracted their attention as it lay amid the dirt and rocks where it had fallen.

Commenting upon its appearance and great weight, Mr. Collins decided to investigate its nature, and, succeeding after a few blows with a heavy sledge, in breaking it in pieces, was surprised and elated to find plainly visible to the naked eye large particles of pure gold and silver.

The outward appearance of the rock would indicate to the experienced eye of a practical miner that the bowlder had broken from a "lead" some distance from where it was found and traveled and rolled, perhaps a few feet at a time, down the mountain side to the point where it was finally noticed.

But where that "lead" was located, how it might be found and its extent after being found, were questions which remained to be solved.

With the breaking of the bowlder and the consequent discovery of its richness as a mineral-bearing rock, Mr. Collins' visitor declared his determination to find the main body of quartz of which this was a disengaged portion.

He soon entered upon the work of prospecting, and, going far up the mountain side, began his work. For two long years that determined man labored with pick and shovel, slowly tunneling his way into the mountain, the loosened dirt and rock being conveyed to the mouth of the tunnel by means of a wheelbarrow.

Alone and without a word of cheer, in the face of discouragements and despite the existing uncertainty as to whether his labor was being directed in the right direction, this courageous miner toiled slowly on, ever hopeful and always fully determined never to give up until he had at last found the hidden treasure.

As time wore on his funds became almost exhausted and even the necessities of flour and meat were with the utmost difficulty procured.

But at last there came the reward so justly earned and at the expiration of these many months of untiring labor the then almost penniless, but stout-hearted, miner and now the wealthiest and best known banker of the city of Helena, Montana, in the depths of that so slowly excavated tunnel, struck with his well-worn pick the rick gold-bearing "lead" of the world-famous Drum Lummon mine.

This mine, which the discoverer in a few years sold for the sum of one million six hundred thousand dollars, has, it is estimated, up to the present time produced between fifteen and twenty millions of dollars, and those in charge of the work at present state that the future prospects of the mine are very bright.

As I have before said, during the summer following our marriage all went well with us in our mountain home and the season's work was a profitable one. That year, I remember, winter came upon us quite early and by the middle of November the ground was thickly covered with a blanket of snow. The greater number of the miners in the vicinity had suspended operations in their mines and abandoned their work until the following spring, so we were practically alone in the gulch.

Quite early on the morning of the 19th day of November—the date I shall never forget—Mr. Collins was at work with an unruly colt which he had a few days before purchased, endeavoring to "break" the animal to the halter and harness.

With a long rope the colt was tied to a tree near the cabin, and, finding itself securely held by the rope, was franticly struggling to break the fastenings which held it. Finally, with a series of quick and desperate plunges, the animal circled about the tree, and Mr. Collins, in endeavoring to get from its path, slipped and fell. His right leg became entangled in the rope and when at last disengaged it was found that the limb was badly bruised and terribly shattered.

As best I could I half carried and half dragged him to the cabin and after repeated efforts succeeded in placing him upon the bed. With bandages torn from the bedclothes I bound his injured limb and in every way possible sought to alleviate his pain and suffering for the time being, intending to leave him alone for a few hours while I went for medical assistance.

As I was about to start, he asked for a drink of water, and taking the pail I started for the spring which supplied the cabin and which was located some twenty or thirty rods down the steep bank, near the bottom of the gulch.

The path leading to the spring was, in the summer even, a steep and difficult one to traverse, but now that snow had fallen, ice had formed upon its surface from top to bottom and only with the utmost difficulty could it be traveled.

As I neared the spring I lost my footing and went sliding and rolling to the very edge of the water. Hastily scrambling to my feet, I started to step forward to fill the pail which I still held in my hand, but the first step was my last, for as I threw my weight upon my left foot I sank to the ground sick and faint with pain, for in falling my left ankle had been shattered and splintered.

As I regained consciousness I crept to the spring, and partially filling the pail with water, turned and started on the painful journey to the cabin.

Creeping on my hands and knees up that steep, slippery path, suffering untold agony from the pain in my broken ankle, I finally reached the door and at last managed, after many trials, to get upon the bed.

By this time both Mr. Collins' broken leg and my shattered ankle had swollen to an enormous size and we were both almost frantic and delerious from pain. Unable to move, even so much as to procure food or replenish the fire with fuel we thus lay for two long, weary and tiresome days and nights, at the end of which time there came at the door of our cabin a gentle rapping.

Bidding the visitor enter, the door opened and from the cold and storm without crept in a half famished, half frozen Chinaman, known throughout the camp as "Old John." Seeing us lying upon the bed, perceiving the lack of warmth within the cabin, and observing at a glance that all was not well with us, his first words were, "Missy sickee. John sorry muchee. Me helpee you," and at once he set about starting a fire, after which he brought us food and administered to our wants as best he could and then hurried away for other help.

But a few hours passed ere our cabin was half filled with sympathizing miner friends and with the coming of a physician who had been summoned from Helena we were relieved from our suffering to as great an extent as lay within the power of human hands.

A few days later witnessed our departure for the hospital at Helena, both of us being conveyed to that place upon a bed and attended by our kind-hearted miner neighbors. This was, as I have previously said, in the month of November, but our return journey was not accomplished until a greater part of the month of May had come and gone, and when we again reached our little cabin the buckskin sack in which was contained our little store of gold dust was lighter by just $1,500.

But "it never rains but it pours" was to prove true in this case as in nearly all others, and ere we had fairly finished our first meal after our arrival home a terrific downpour of water carried upon its crest the large reservoir owned by Mr. Collins, which was situated some distance up the gulch and employed to hold a supply of water with which to operate his mine, and with it went nearly a mile of sluice boxes. The property was worth, at a conservative estimate, fully $800 to $1,000.

These events, following so closely upon one another as they did, as a natural consequence greatly discouraged and disheartened us and we at once decided to discontinue the business of mining and engage in that of cattle raising. A purchaser for our mine was found in a company of Chinamen and in the August following the property was sold.

By November our cattle had been bought and in that month we took up our residence on a rented ranch in the Prickly Pear Valley, about eight miles from our former home, with a "bunch" of cattle numbering 180 head.

The winter was an unusually severe one. Snow and storms, high winds and blinding blasts were the order of the day and with the coming of spring the prairies were seen thickly dotted with the dead bodies of famished and frozen animals.

Our loss that year was very heavy indeed, but still we were hopeful for the future, and during the following summer labored diligently in an effort to prepare for the coming season of cold and snow, but again the storms were frequent and severe and many head of stock were lost from our little "bunch."

The following spring Mr. Collins decided to search for a more favored locality and, having heard much in favor of the Teton Valley, visited this locality and returned very favorably impressed with the outlook.

Gathering our cattle for the start, we were about to undertake the journey to our new home, when Mr. Collins was taken very suddenly ill and had to be taken to the hospital at Helena for medical treatment, but after his recovery we proceeded on our travels and on the 3rd day of August we arrived at Old Agency, Choteau County, now Choteau, Teton County, locating at a point about midway of the beautiful Teton Valley and distant some one-half to three-fourths of a mile from the present sight of the village of Choteau.

Of my life since that date much might be written were details indulged in, but this I shall not attempt, but on the contrary shall only refer to a few of the events which are the most closely connected with the history of the Teton Valley and the town of Choteau, concluding with a short account of my first shipment of cattle and the events which led to the possession by me of the title of "Cattle Queen of Montana."

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CHAPTER XX.

The Teton Valley—Choteau—The Murder of Mrs Armstrong and Mr. Morgan—Our First Sermon—The Terrible Fate of Our First Resident Physician—Move to Willow Creek—An Invitation.

The Teton Valley was at the time of our first visiting it, and is at present, a locality destined by nature as one well adapted to the raising of stock.

In extent it is about eight miles in width and fifteen miles in length, abundant in hearty and nutritious grasses, well watered with clear, cool and swift-running streams and bounded with verdant foothills peculiarly adapted to the sheltering of stock in the severe winter season.

Timber for structures and fuel is quite easily procured, and, withal, a more fertile and favored spot would be hard of finding, within the boundaries of Montana at least.

Midway in the valley, upon the banks of the Teton river, is located the pretty little village of Choteau—a wide-awake, enterprising Montana town of about five hundred souls, and it was at this place, consisting then of but a single store and one or two houses, that my only daughter was born in November of 1881, such event being looked upon by the few settlers in that locality at that time as quite an important one, inasmuch as the little one was the first white child to claim Choteau as a birthplace.

A few months prior to the birth of my little daughter, there was enacted, a few miles from our home, one of the most brutal and bloody murders ever coming under my notice.

At the forks of the Teton and Muddy rivers, some twenty or twenty-five miles from Choteau, lived a widow lady, named Mrs. Armstrong, in company with two little adopted half-breed Indian girls, and her own son, a young man some twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

As an inmate of the house was also a gentleman named Morgan, in company with whom Mrs. Armstrong was interested in the ownership of a number of head of horses and cattle.

About the first of July there came to the house a man who claimed to be in search of lost stock. He remained in the neighborhood several days, frequently visiting the house at meal times and partaking of the food so willingly offered him, and was entertained as a friend, Mr. Morgan even going with him on various trips in search of the lost stock of which he told.

On the seventh day of July, 1881, the stranger was at the house for supper and accepted an invitation to remain during the night.

The house was built of logs, and in the upper story of the same Mr. Morgan had his bed, Mrs. Armstrong and the little girls occupying apartments on the ground floor. The dwelling was as yet unfinished and for this reason a rude ladder on the outside was used by which to mount to the floor above, instead of a stairway.

After a pleasant chat during the evening hours, all retired, the stranger sharing with Mr. Morgan the bed in the room on the upper floor.

Just as the morning's light announced the approach of day, Mrs. Armstrong and the little ones were awakened by the report of a discharged firearm, and as the older girl ran from the house to ascertain from whence the sound came, the stranger was in the act of descending the ladder, and in a rough voice commanded her to return.

The little one, badly frightened, obeyed the command and flew to the side of her mother. The man proceeded around the house, silently entered a back door, and as Mrs. Armstrong stood peering out of the front window in an effort to ascertain his whereabouts, raised his rifle and shot the defenseless woman in the back, killing her almost instantly.

Grabbing the older girl he commanded her to inform him as to the whereabouts of the valuables and funds of the household, at the same time threatening her life if she refused.

She told him where these articles were to be found, and as he engaged in the search, crept from the house. Her first thought was of Mr. Morgan, and creeping up the ladder she peered into the room above, and there, on the bed where the murderer had shot him, was the bleeding body of the man she sought.

Descending to the ground, little Maggie grasped the hand of the other child and fled to the brush along the bank of the river—the children during the course of their flight falling some fifteen or twenty feet down the steep bank to the river-bed below.

Proceeding a short distance down the stream, they hid amid the brush for several hours. Soon after secreting themselves, the distant roar of flames and the clouds of dense smoke told them of the firing of the house and the destruction of their home, but so frightened were the little ones that they dared not move lest they be discovered by the brute from whose bloody hands they had by rare good fortune escaped.

Late that afternoon the son of the murdered woman, in company with a party of cowboys, returned from a ride upon the range and discovered the condition of affairs at the house.

As the poor boy neared the smoking ruins and, amid the ashes and half-burned logs, could discern the charred and blackened bodies of his dear mother and the murdered man, his grief was almost uncontrollable

Not knowing, of course, the particulars of the terrible tragedy, he at once came to the conclusion that they had been burned while they slept—but when in a few hours

Start of Riders from "Round-up" Camp.

thereafter he became aware of the true version of the affair, his grief and sorrow knew no bounds and with moans and cries of anguish he bemoaned his dear mother's death and with tears streaming down his cheeks besought his companions to avenge the same.

The little girls, after several hours of hiding, became tired and hungry and finally ventured forth from their retreat, and finding a gentle horse picketed near by the spot where the house had stood, after many efforts succeeded in mounting the animal and started to the house of the nearest neighbor—some fifteen miles distant.

On the way they met the gentleman to whose home they were going, and told him of their terrible experience. Bidding the children proceed onward until the house was reached, he rode with speed to the scene of the tragedy, and finding the situation as described by the children, he hastened on to Choteau to give the alarm.

That evening a man answering the description given by the children and who had during the day acted in a very suspicious manner about the town, was arrested at the tepee of an Indian family, about a mile from the town.

The man positively declared lack of knowledge or implication in the event, but nevertheless the children were sent for the following day, and as a test of their ability to identify the murderer, the accused man was placed in the ranks of a long line of men and the children led along the front of the same and asked to select, if he be among the number, the man who committed the bloody deed.

Without the slightest hesitancy the guilty man was pointed out. Then upon the long counter of the village store was laid in line the rifles of all present, among them being the one carried by the prisoner at the time of his capture.

As the older girl examined the firearms she with equal certainty selected one near the center of the line, stating that she was certain of its identity owing to the presence on the "stock" of a bright brass plate, which as it glistened in the light had attracted her attention the morning of the murder as the man carried the weapon in his hand while descending the ladder at the home.

The evidence was considered sufficient and conclusive, the accused was given a trial, pronounced guilty and that night, fearing lest violence might be done the condemned man, the sheriff departed with his prisoner for Fort Benton, that being the nearest point at which might be found a suitable jail.

A large cottonwood tree stands near the crossing of Spring Creek by the Fort Benton road, some two miles from the village of Choteau. Rumor has it that from the limb of that tree was once suspended by a stout rope the body of a man who had foully murdered a defenseless man and woman, and while the warm life blood was still trickling from their ghastly wounds robbed them of their money and valuables and then, as a fitting completion of his brutal work, fired their home and allowed the flames to feast upon their dead bodies.

Whether such report was true or not I could not for a certainty state, inasmuch as I was not an eye witness to the event, but be that as it may, I do feel safe in saying without fear of contradiction, that in case such an event did occur it would be safe to wager that the body was not suspended between the limb above and the earth below by a rope tied about the WAIST of the man.

The death of Mrs. Armstrong in such a terrible manner, left the little girls Annie and Maggie—aged respectively 7 and 11 years—without a home or a mother's care.

Prior to the terrible event the lady and I had been the best of friends and passed many and many an hour in each other's company, and at once I offered the little girls a shelter and home beneath my roof. The older one, Maggie, remained with me for several years, finally marrying and going to a home of her own, while the younger girl was taken by a kind lady of Helena and there reared.

Our life during the first few years we were residents of the Teton Valley was indeed a lonesome one. Settlers were "few and far between" and for over a year after I first made this section of country my home I was not offered the opportunity of speaking to or even gaining sight of a white woman.

Our only neighbors and associates were Indians—and I must say that these people were very kind and obliging and the best of neighbors. But still at times as I went about my work in my little log cabin there would come upon me a longing for the sight of a white woman and I could have covered with kisses and clasped in my arms with a feeling of sincere welcome the ugliest and homeliest woman on earth provided she could speak my own language.

In our business of stock raising we prospered and as we saw our little bunch of stock increasing year by year and witnessed the coming of an occassional new settler we were content and withal happy with our lot, and when at last the little settlement had increased in size and importance to a sufficient degree to warrant the locating in our midst of a resident physician and we were able to occasionally listen to the preaching of the Word of God we felt that indeed we were a favored people and that soon would we be in the midst of civilization.

Our first sermon was from the lips of Rev. W. W. Van Orsdel of Helena, now a resident of Great Falls and Presiding Elder of one of the largest districts in Montana. He came to us in that far out-of-the-way place where as yet no other missionary had ventured, and his songs of praise and words of divine truth gladdened our hearts and cheered us on as nothing else could have done.

There in that little log hut, as he stood before his little audience and told of the kindness and love of Jesus there appeared to come to him as he spoke an inspiration from the throne of God and when, in conclusion, he invoked the Divine blessing upon our heads and prayed that God might keep over us a watchful eye and so guide our steps as to lead us safely on to Everlasting Life, all felt the influence of His presence and went forth to their homes and duties happy in spirit and light of heart, and with a kindly and loving feeling for the good and noble man who had come to our midst with the glad tidings, and from that day to this has "Brother Van," as he is familiarly called, been held in reverence by the settlers of this section.

Our first resident physician was a gentleman bearing the name of Dr. Smith. He had formerly been an army physician and came to our settlement from Fort Shaw, where he had been stationed for several years prior to his coming to our section.

"The Doctor," as all called him, was a kind-hearted, genial and accommodating gentleman, always ready and willing to undergo any and all hardships and exposure to reach the bedside of a sick person, and in consequence soon won the good will and esteem of the settlers.

While his health was quite poor and notwithstanding the fact that he was far from being a stout and rugged man, still he was very active and energetic and always took a leading part in any and every public enterprise which he thought would further the advancement or prosperity of the little town or settlement wherein he made his home, and thus it was that while engaged in a work for others he lost his life some year and a half following his coming to us.

As the settlement grew slowly in size there finally came a time when the more enterprising and ambitious ones formed the idea that Choteau county should be divided and that our little town was entitled to the distinction of being the county seat of the new county which it was proposed should bear the name of Teton; and it was also proposed that the name of the little village which was in this manner to assume the position of capital of the new county should be changed from Old Agency to that of

Choteau.

This change was finally brought about, and it was while engaged in the work upon this project that Dr. Smith lost his life.

The territory to be effected by the proposed change was a large one and it became necessary in order to secure the names of the scattered settlers to a petition praying for an election at which the question might be voted upon, for men to ride from point to point and from settlement to settlement and secure signatures.

On a cold and stormy day in the late fall, in company with a companion, "The Doctor" started from his home to visit the Sun River settlement, a journey of some forty miles. While riding at a brisk canter across the prairies a few miles from the starting point the horse upon which he was mounted stepped with his front feet into a badger hole, stumbled and fell, throwing his rider violently to the ground which was solidly frozen and as hard as rock.

The unfortunate man lay stunned and unconscious where he fell for a considerable time but finally revived, when it was found that one of his limbs was badly broken.

Taking the saddle from the horse the injured man had been riding, his companion placed it under the doctor's head and then taking his own overcoat from his body he wrapped it closely about the body of the suffering man. In this way he made the doctor as comfortable as possible and then mounting his horse rode hurriedly to town for help. Willing men soon after his arrival were on the way to the rescue with a team and sleigh, but even as they started from town the storm had increased in violence and soon became so blinding as to obliterate all tracks and render impossible of accomplishment the work of finding the man for whom they searched.

During the entire night, as the searching party wandered here and there about the prairies, with difficulty battling with the cutting blasts of the storm, but still continuing the search with praiseworthy bravery and courageousness, that poor suffering man lay far out upon the bleak prairie, unable to move and with almost superhuman effort fighting from his side large blood-thirsty wolves who gathered about him and whom he could only keep at a distance by swinging about his body with one hand, as he lay upon his side, a large bright colored wool scarf which he chanced to wear, and not until daylight and the abatement of the storm had come to the aid of the party of searchers was his whereabouts discovered.

By this time he was so chilled and benumbed and completely exhausted by reason of the terrible ordeal through which he had passed that the effects of the night's experience were more than his body could recover from and a few weeks later, after much suffering and pain, he breathed his last.

No words can portray the torture and suffering experienced by that poor man, and at times as I watched by his bedside and cared for him, I could not but feel that a blessing indeed would have been conferred had the Angel of Death laid his touch upon the brow of the suffering man as he lay that night amid the storm upon the bleak, desolate waste of the boundless prairie, rather than that he should be allowed to linger and suffer such untold agony.

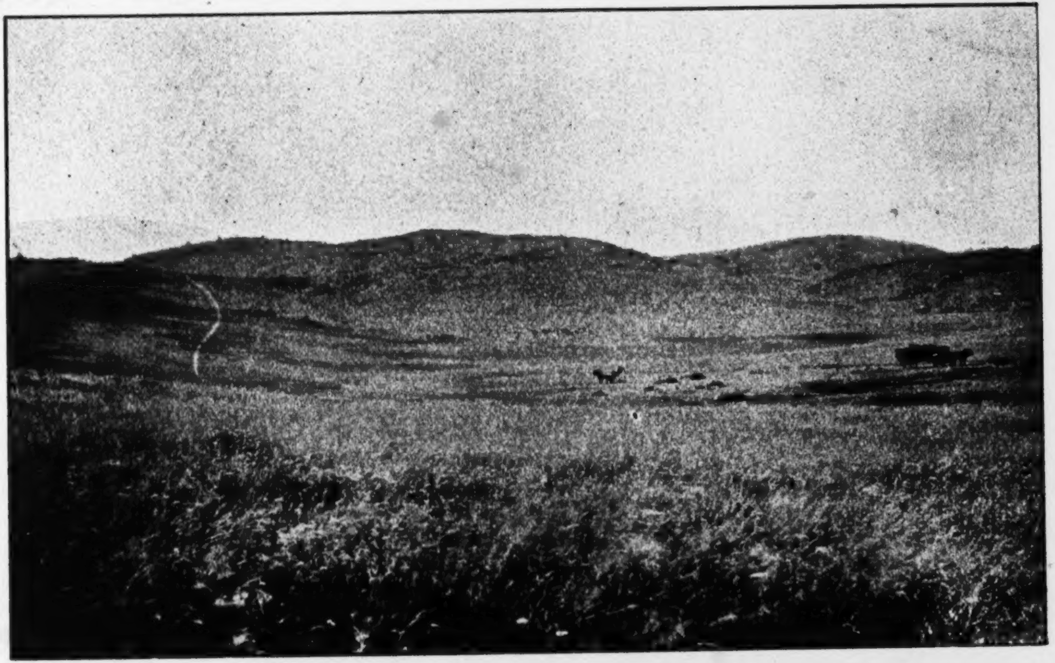
In 1886, in order to find for our now greatly increased bunch of stock, a more extended range—for settlers were by this time quite thick in the Valley—we again changed the location of our ranch, moving to Willow Creek, where we have since resided.

In addition to the "home ranch" a "hay ranch" was purchased and is known as "Hay Coolie." Here during the summer is cut and stacked a sufficient amount of hay to suffice in the feeding of the weaker animals during the winter, who are gathered during the late fall months from the range, the remainder of the stock being allowed to roam at will among the timber of the mountain sides—a distant view of which may be seen in the picture of "Hay Coolie" herewith shown.

Our "home ranch" is situated at a distance of about one and one-half miles from this spot and here we pass our summers, and in the winter either reside at "Hay Coolie" or at our comfortable little residence in Choteau, some twenty-four miles distant, where the advantages of good schooling are to be provided for our only child, now a Miss of thirteen.

My past life of hardship and discomfort is fast fading away, as God in His goodness has seen fit to shower upon me many a blessing and as I now write I find myself surrounded by many a comfort and convenience for which in the years of the past I did not dare to hope.

Kind friends are about me on every side, a loving,



"Hay Coolie"—The "Cattle Queen's" Hay Ranch.

indulgent husband is my constant companion, and as I watch the growth and development into womanhood of my darling child, my only prayer is that I may be given the strength to teach her, as my mother taught me, to be ever mindful of the opportunities to lend a helping hand to those in need and realize the responsibility which God has destined should be the possession through life of every good and noble woman.

Before concluding this unpretentious narrative by an account of my first shipment of cattle I wish before parting with you, kind and indulgent reader, to call your attention to but one fact in particular, and that is this:

The home of the writer is situated on Willow Creek, Teton County, Montana, twenty-four miles distant from Choteau. Day or night, rain or shine, storm or calm the latch-string is always to be found on the outer side of the doors, and within will be met a hearty, cordial and sincere welcome to all who honor the humble home with their presence, and so long as there remains upon the range a single hoof bearing the 77 brand its owners will, if need be, willingly and cheerfully part with the same in order to share with their friends or those in need the needed crust of bread.

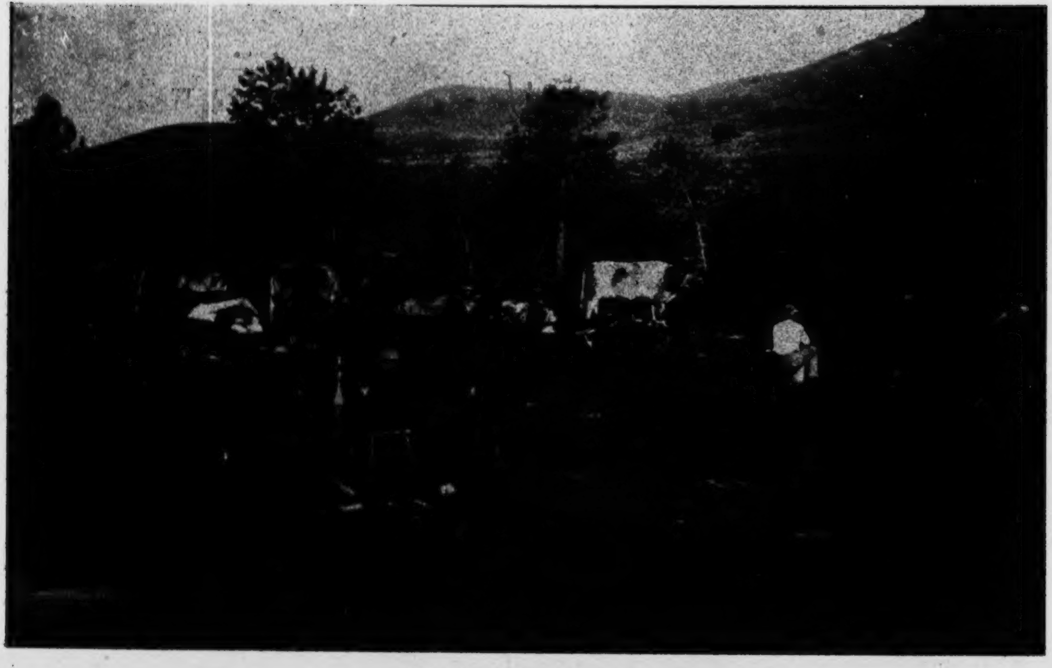
CHAPTER XXI.

INCIDENTS AND EVENTS IN CONNECTION WITH MY FIRST SHIPMENT OF CATTLE—"SUCCESS TO AUNTY COLLINS, THE CATTLE QUEEN OF MONTANA"—THANKS TO THE PRESS—A COMMENT FROM ONE OF THE LEADING PAPERS OF MONTANA.

The Chicago Drovers' Journal, in an issue during October, 1891, contained an item of some length, in which was to be found the following words:

" Mrs. Nat. Collins, of Choteau, Mont., is here with "
" cattle that sold at $3.65 @ $4.00. Mrs. Collins enjoys "
" the distinction of being the first lady cattle shipper "
" from Montana to the Chicago market. "

Whether or not I shall be able to place upon paper a comprehensive review of the events which led up to the existence of facts prompting the writing of that one brief statement, I hardly know, but as I have promised the



Milking at the Home Ranch.

reader, in a preceeding chapter, to do so, I shall endeavor to keep good the promise.

For many years prior to the date mentioned it had been our custom to dispose of our surplus beeves every fall to buyers who came to the ranch and bargained for them.

This practice was quite general with the ranchmen, but, just in order to be contrary, I suppose—as all women have the general reputation of being—I at last expressed the opinion to my husband that we were not receiving full value for our stock by practicing this custom, and at last succeeded in inducing him to ship a consignment of beeves to the Chicago market. The experiment proved a most successful one and the following year found us, as fall approached, again preparing to ship to Chicago.

All went well during the time of gathering and "cutting out" the cattle destined for the long journey, but just a few days prior to the start for Great Falls, from which place the cattle were to go by train, Mr. Collins became quite sick and he dare not undertake the hardships of the trip, and thus there remained but two things to be done—either I must myself accompany the stock or the shipment must be abandoned, for it would be folly to trust to a stranger the handling of the beeves and the large amount of money received from their sale in Chicago.

For a lady to undertake such a task and carry it through to a successful ending was an event as yet unheard of in the history of the cattle trade, but notwithstanding this fact, I determined to try—no one knows what they can do until they try—and therefore, when the time had come for the start, it found me ready, dressed and prepared to mount the "grub wagon" and take my place in the procession with the lines by which the team was guided in my hands.

The cowboys in charge of the stock were all well-known to me and trustworthy men, and therefore I experienced no unusual anxiety as to the trip from the "home ranch" to the shipping point, Great Falls, but beyond that I knew not what to expect.

My greatest fear was of the "railroad men." I had always heard of them—much as eastern people hear of "cowboys"—as a class utterly devoid of the slightest dictates of manly instinct; men who would insult, mistreat, rob, plunder and even cut the throat of a woman did she but dare to show her presence in the "caboose" of their train; men who delighted in rowdyish acts, fought regularly before breakfast and after each meal, washed their hands and faces only upon the occasion of their marriage or the funeral of a relative—in fact my opinion of these men was anything but favorable, and as I have before said, I looked upon them in much the same light as do the people of the eastern states who know only of the western cowboys by the knowledge they have gained from misleading, trashy and untruthful accounts with which those sections have been flooded in past years.

As would be their experience were they to visit the home of the cowboy, from the first day's dealing with the class of men of whom I stood in such terrible dread until the present date, their conduct has been only that of gentlemen —never an insulting word or unkind act, but on the

At Work on a "Round-up."

contrary, I have always been treated with the greatest respect and accorded every favor within their power to bestow.

After a four day's journey, during which time we "camped out" wherever night overtook us, I arrived at Great Falls. I had previously ordered cars for the reception of the stock, but upon arriving there was informed that I would be obliged to await the arrival of more stock for shipment, as my consignment was not of sufficient number to load a full train and, therefore, would not be shipped until such time as a sufficient number of cattle had arrived to constitute a full train of twenty-two cars, each containing twenty-two head of beeves.

Another difficulty also arose. Among the rules of the railroad company, I was informed, was one in particular which prohibited the granting of a pass to a lady who wished to accompany stock upon a cattle train, or even allowing her to ride upon such train provided she paid full fare.

Here indeed was a dilemma. My stock was ready for shipment but I could not ship. Expenses were fast accumulating and everything was going wrong.

Not only did I have cattle to ship but, in addition, a "band" of horses were to be sent east. Among these was a valuable pacer which I had intended to place in the hands of an experienced trainer upon my arrival in the states, and which I had every reason to believe would at some future date return a handsome price.

As I drove from the city to camp one morning I found this animal lying at the outskirts of the camp, stone dead. Asking as to the manner of its death, I was informed that a cowboy had saddled the animal, preparatory to riding it and that, becoming frightened, it had reared and fallen backward and broken its neck.

I have during my life passed through many a discouragement and have been overtaken by many a disheartening event, but, without exception, I never experienced a more trying time than during those ten days of waiting before I finally saw my cattle and horses loaded and safely started on their long journey and found myself sitting bolt upright on the leather cushions of that hard-riding "caboose" with the much-dreaded "railroad men" about me.

The accident to my highly prized pacer for the time unnerved me, and leaving the camp, I wandered to the banks of the river, near by, and there, alone and unseen, gave vent to my disappointment and discouragement in tears and moans.

But it does a woman good to cry, and when I had finished playing baby I arose, with a determination to succeed or die, and on the banks of that muddy Missouri I vowed to secure my rights and accompany my stock to market or, in an attempt to do so, forfeit each and every individual head of stock I owned in the effort to ascertain why I should be denied the privilege and right.

With this determination firmly fixed in my heart I returned to camp, took my team and again drove to the city. Meeting a representative of a Chicago commission firm, whose headquarters were at Great Falls, I told him of my situation and requested him to telegraph the proper officials of the railroad at St. Paul, stating the circumstances and requesting permission to travel with my stock.

This he kindly consented to do, and as a reply the local agent of the railway company received instructions to grant me a pass, and accompanying the same was a notice to all conductors and employes of the train upon which I was to travel to "provide for the comfort of Mrs. Nat. Collins, the bearer of this pass, in every possible way and treat her with all respect due a perfect lady, under penalty of discharge upon failure to do so."

At last the victory was won and from that time forward all went as merrily as a marriage bell.

As the train stood at the station ready to start upon its long journey, upon the platform of the depot was gathered a large number of cowboys and ranchmen from various sections, who had arrived in the city with stock for shipment, and as I mounted the steps of the smoke-stained "caboose" from that crowd of sturdy men arose a long and hearty cheer, and as the signal for departure was given, and amid the excitement of the moment as the cowboys waved high in the air their broad sombreros, in a clear voice rang out the words, "Success to Aunty Collins, THE CATTLE QUEEN OF MONTANA."

From that moment the name has clung to me, and in its possession I experience much pride.

At Minot, North Dakota, a stop was made and the stock fed. Again proceeding on our journey, St. Paul was reached on schedule time, and here I was called upon, at the parlors of the Merchants Hotel, by several of the high officials of the road over whose line I was shipping and honored by the presentation of a first-class ticket over the line leading to Chicago, to which place I traveled by passenger train in advance of my stock.

Arriving at Chicago, after the expiration of a sufficient time in which to wash and attire myself in clean clothing, I visited the stock yards and there disposed of my stock, receiving in payment therefor a sum several hundred dollars in excess of the price I had been offered at the ranch and at Great Falls.

Since that time I have regularly each year accompanied my stock to the Chicago market. This procedure has, as a matter of course, occasioned much comment upon the part of newspapers and magazines throughout the country, inasmuch as it is looked upon as quite unusual for a lady to thus pay attention to the details of the business in which we are engaged.

Kindly thanking the press for their many words of praise and good cheer, bidding adieu to the indulgent reader who has honored this volume by a perusal, and wishing all a life of health, prosperity and happiness, I will close my story with a clipping from one of the leading papers of Montana:

" Mrs. Nat. Collins has earned for herself the distinction "
" of being the first and only lady in Montana to "
" raise, ship and accompany the train bearing her stock "
" to the Chicago market and personally superintend the "
" unloading of the animals and their sale, and throughout "

" the length and breadth of the land she is known as "
" THE CATTLE QUEEN OF MONTANA. She is well informed "
" on every subject pertaining to stock raising, and her "
" judgment is often asked by others regarding purchases "
" and other matters pertaining to the industry. Per- "
" sonally Mrs. Collins is a charming lady. There is "
" nothing masculine in her appearance or conversation. "
" Her home life is pleasant and her homes—for she "
" divides her time between a town and country residence "
" —are beautifully furnished. No one would suspect "
" when engaging in conversation with the modest and "
" unpretending lady that she was the manager of a large "
" stock business—a duty which devolves upon her by "
" reason of her husband's poor health. Her homes are "
" decorated with many specimens of her handiwork. "
" She is an artist of no mean pretensions, and many a "
" charming sketch and bit of coloring are the product of "
" her brush. Socially she is very highly esteemed by all "
" who know her, and in the financial and business "
" centers she commands universal admiration for her "
" thorough knowledge on every subject and the tact she "
" has displayed in the conduct of her affairs, for THE '
" QUEEN is indeed a finanacier and has succeeded in "
" accumulating a fortune. Mrs. Collins is, in fact, a lady "
" of whom Montana may well be justly proud. "